

Palestinian lawmakers call for end to corruption

By Wafa Amr
Reuters

GAZA — Palestinian lawmakers called on Monday for an end to corruption and financial chaos which they said plagued the government of President Yasser Arafat.

"We need to carry out a democratic revolution. We need to move towards proper democratic practices and proper institution building and respect of the sovereignty of law," said legislator Abdul Fatah Hamayel.

"We are still too far away from reaching this democratic goal," he told Reuters.

"This could be done by criticism and dialogue."

Findings released on Saturday from a 600-page report prepared by an auditing office set up by Mr. Arafat showed that some ministers and senior civil servants had squandered or mismanaged \$326 million in public funds in 1996.

"There is a consensus that the Palestinian (National) Authority suffers financial, administrative and organisational chaos and if things continue this way we are heading towards a disaster," said legislator Hikmat Zeid. "Public institutions don't

function right. Too many people are employed in the 24 ministries regardless of qualifications," he said. "Some ministers act like kings in their ministries. Reform and reorganisation are certainly required."

Some lawmakers have called for dissolving the Palestinian Legislative Council and holding new elections.

Others, expressing frustration at what they said was the authority's mismanagement of money and disrespect for the council's resolutions, demanded a cabinet reshuffle.

Legislators complained that some ministers enjoyed perks such as payments from the authority to cover rent for two residences, one in the West Bank and the other in Gaza, and others had acquired several cars and a phalanx of bodyguards.

"We have summoned some ministers and officials for questioning at the council. Most have tried to escape responsibility by blaming Arafat for making all the decisions," Mr. Zeid said.

"I have worked for years with Arafat and I know this is not true. He does not know about the actions of many of

his ministers and he does not control every little thing...I think some ministers should be tried and resign," Mr. Zeid added.

Officials said the audit report mentioned five ministers by name who it charged were involved in squandering public funds.

Mr. Arafat, they said, set up a committee to examine the findings and gave the report to the legislature for debate.

Jirar Al Qudwa, head of the monitoring institution which wrote the report, said some government employees had run up extremely

high telephone bills and Mr. Arafat responded by limiting international dialling to ministers and their directors-general.

"The president also responded by reducing the number of people who use mobile phones and government cars," Mr. Qudwa said. He said the funds mentioned in the report did not include contributions pledged by international donors to support the ailing Palestinian economy.

"We asked the donors for a list of disbursed funds but they refused to cooperate with us," Mr. Qudwa said.

Syrian PM: No reason to resume talks with Israel

CAIRO (AFP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Al Zo'bi said here Monday there is nothing new in Israel's position that would justify a resumption of Israeli-Syrian negotiations, broken off in February 1996.

"Those who listen to Israeli statements know that there is nothing new on the peace process," Mr. Zo'bi told journalists after he met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Mr. Zo'bi's visit came the day before Mr. Mubarak's summit with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Sharm Al Sheikh, Egypt.

In a reference to the Turkish incursion into northern Iraq, Mr. Zo'bi said: "Like all Arab states, we are against violating the sovereignty of a brother Arab country."

"This has always been Syria's position. In the past as now we are on the side of the Iraqi people," he told reporters who had asked whether an apparent thaw in Syrian-Iraqi relations was the result of fear of the Turkish-Israeli military alliance.

Turkey invaded northern Iraq May 14 in an operation

against the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is fighting for a homeland in southern Turkey.

Since then, Turkey has tripled its presence in northern Iraq to about 30,000 troops and killed nearly 1,450 PKK rebels.

Mr. Zo'bi said an Iraqi call for a meeting of Arab foreign ministers on the peace process was still "at the statement stage and not yet a crystallised idea."

A seven-member trade delegation from Syria visited Iraq last week in the first such mission for almost two decades, and an Iraqi economic delegation is to visit Syria soon, a member of the Syrian delegation said Saturday.

Mr. Zo'bi said he and Mr. Mubarak discussed "several Arab and international matters of mutual interest" and expansion of the joint Syrian-Egyptian committee's work.

The Syrian prime minister and his Egyptian counterpart, Kamal Al Ganzuoni, were to chair a meeting of the committee on encouraging investment between the two countries.

Qadhafi calls chemical arms poor man's weapon

CAIRO (AP) — Attempts to rid the world of chemical weapons are a sham meant to deprive poor countries of defence against American aggression, Libya's leader said Sunday.

"Chemical arms are the weapons of the poor because America cannot move its troops into the territories of these countries if they have these weapons," Colonel Muammar Qadhafi said in an interview with Al Jazeera, a Qatari satellite channel monitored in Cairo.

Col. Qadhafi did not say whether Libya had chemical weapons, but the West suspects it has sought to produce and stockpile them.

Last month, the chemical weapons convention came into effect, banning the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons. About 165 countries have signed the convention, but only 90 have ratified it. Libya is not among them.

The United States ratified it only in April.

Col. Qadhafi said international attempts to ban landmines have the same goal: to deprive the poor of defence.

In a question-and-answer session, he dismissed some callers as ignorant, saying they knew nothing about Libya.

One caller accused his government of human rights abuses, including executions and kidnapping of dissidents.

Col. Qadhafi replied: "These are CIA spies. Why do you defend them? We have no dissidents in Libya."

Col. Qadhafi also said he had urged Arab leaders to gather for a meeting to discuss the fate of the Arab World in the 21st century. He did not say whether anyone had responded.

Palestinians allege extortion by Israeli ministry employees

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Arab employees of Israel's Interior Ministry are demanding large bribes from Arab residents of east Jerusalem to keep from losing their residency rights in the city, a Palestinian lawmaker said Monday.

Hatem Abdul Qader, a legislator representing Jerusalem, told the Associated Press that the Palestinian Legislative Council has received hundreds of complaints from east Jerusalem residents who say they have been asked for bribes of as much as \$5,000.

"We are still investigat-

ing. We still need to prove that these claims are true," Abdul Qader said. He refused to give names or details of the cases.

David Bar-Ilan, a top adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, called the claims "nasty slander."

Palestinians and Israeli human rights activists have accused the Netanyahu government of deliberately revoking the residency rights of hundreds of Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem in order to strengthen Israel's grip on the disputed city.

According to the Pales-

tinian newspaper Al Ayyam, there are 20 Arab employees in the east Jerusalem branch of the interior ministry.

Abdul Qader said the Palestinian National Authority would prosecute any Arab employee of the ministry found guilty of demanding bribes.

"This is a very dangerous situation," Mr. Abdul Qader said. The workers have "betrayed their Arab family and will be brought to justice — Palestinian authority justice."

Under the PLO-Israel peace agreements, the Palestinian authority is

barred from operating in Jerusalem until the status of the city is determined in talks on a final peace settlement. However, east Jerusalem's 180,700 Arab residents voted in last year's Palestinian elections and are represented in the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said the legislators from Jerusalem have no authority in Jerusalem, and that any judicial or police activity in the city would be a violation of the peace accords and Israeli law.

Interior Minister Eli Shimon issued a statement saying the Palestinian

authority's threats would "adversely affect the services provided to the residents of east Jerusalem."

"We do not intend to surrender to threats, and the ministry of the interior will continue to enforce the law to the letter," the statement said.

The ministry revoked the residency permits of 689 Palestinians in 1996, and has begun proceedings to revoke hundreds more already this year.

"This is a clear threat to our existence in the city," Mr. Abdul Qader said. "We cannot just stand by and allow this to happen."

Turkish troops move to edge of northern Iraq buffer zone

ANKARA (AP) — Turkish troops, chasing Kurdish rebels in a cross-border offensive, have moved to the edge of a buffer zone in northern Iraq established to prevent attacks on Iraqi Kurds, news reports said Sunday.

Yeni Yuzyl newspaper said Turkish soldiers had set up checkpoints only a few kilometres away from the 36th Parallel.

North of the 36th Parallel is a no-fly zone established after the Gulf war to keep out Iraqi military planes or

helicopters. U.S. war planes fly regular patrols over the zone from a base in southern Turkey.

The reports follow accusations by a rebel Kurdish commander that Turkey had occupied the buffer zone. The zone is about 330 kilometres wide and 65 kilometres deep.

Yeni Yuzyl said the troops had established the checkpoints to prevent rebels of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) from escaping into areas under the control of Iraq.

An estimated 25,000 to 50,000 troops entered into northern Iraq May 14 in a bid to crack down on the PKK, which holds bases in the region. The rebels' northern Iraq are estimated to be around 10,000.

Turkish troops have crossed into northern Iraq for the past four years, but it was the first time they had moved this deep.

"The aim of the offensive is to take over ... camps where the (PKK) rebels have established themselves, to render them inef-

ficient, to destroy and take over their equipment," the Anatolia news agency quoted General Altay Tokat, a regional commander, as saying Saturday.

The military claim to have killed over a thousand of rebels and captured

hundreds since the start of the cross-border push.

Turkey said last fall it wanted to establish a buffer zone inside Iraq to prevent rebel infiltrations into Turkey. The plan was approved by Washington. It was not clear if that plan

was now being set in motion.

London-based Kurdish Med TV reported Friday that the PKK threatened to carry out suicide attacks within Turkey if it did not withdraw troops from the buffer zone.

Ten people have been killed in the past two years in suicide bomb attacks blamed on the PKK.

The PKK has been fighting for autonomy in south-eastern Turkey for 13 years. The war has cost of some 28,000 lives.



Iran's president-elect Mohammad Khatami (right) is watched closely by security guards as he enters his car after visiting the mausoleum of late spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on Monday. Khatami, moving Islamic revolution (Reuters photo)

Water flows from Israel

(Continued from page 1)

agreed to begin negotiations with Israel on the construction of two rail links between the two countries, AFP reported.

Agreement to hold the infrastructure talks was made possible following Israel's approval Friday on water deal.

"As a result of the improvement in the general atmosphere, the Jordanians are ready to start discussions on the railroads," Ronen Gissin, spokesman for the Israeli National Infrastructure Ministry, told AFP.

Ariel Sharon, minister of

infrastructure, said three international companies have already expressed interest in financing the construction of the two rail lines between Israel and Jordan.

The first line would allow Jordan to export Dead Sea chemicals through Israel's Mediterranean Port of Ashdod in addition to the Red Sea Port of Aqaba.

A second rail line would be laid between Aqaba and Israel's neighbouring port of Eilat in an effort to improve tourism.

There are also proposals to build a rail line between the sister ports and the Dead Sea area to increase the flow

of freight and another between Israel's Haifa port and the Jordanian city of Maftaq, Israel Radio said.

The two countries have also recently agreed to advance work on a joint airport near Aqaba and Eilat at the same time that Jordan okayed the use of its Aqaba airport by Israeli planes during peak tourism seasons.

Mr. Tourgeman said that a meeting will take place in Aqaba on Tuesday to discuss the joint airport project. He said that Israel will be represented by Chaim Sharon, head of the Israeli Civil Aviation.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35 French Programmes
16:00 Super Sports Folies
16:30 Dog House
17:10 The Album Show
18:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Coach
20:00 Doc — Tilt
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Doc — Nature of Things
22:00 News in English
22:25 Snowy River
23:00 Mission Impossible

PRAYER TIMES

03:56 Fajr
05:28 (Sunrise) Duha
12:33 Dhuhur
16:13 'Asr
19:38 Maghreb
21:09 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swiffah. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel.
661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751

Armenian International Church
Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds north-westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly and seas calm.

Amman 17/30
Aqaba 23/37
Deserts 16/34
Jordan Valley 22/36

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 30, Aqaba 37 Humidity
readings: Amman 32 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 74685
Dr. Issam Al Asmar 890504
Dr. Khalid Klob 816715

Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637055
Al Saham pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisuni pharmacy 637661

Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230

Najib pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Safarini 901323
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Dept. 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 0853200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Mohajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:20 Beirut (RJ)

08:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

09:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:10 Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:15 Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
13:00 Paris (RJ)
13:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
13:35 Frankfurt (RJ)
14:00 London (RJ)
21:20 Larnaca (RJ)
21:20 Jeddah (RJ)
21:40 Damascus (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:50 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:40 Munich (YP)
14:55 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)
18:05 Kiev (LU)
19:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:30 Cairo (MS)
21:30 Tel Aviv (LY)
22:50 Aden (CY)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)
00:55 Bucharest (RO)
01:25 Jakarta (GA)
03:00 Rome (AZ)
04:40 London (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:20 Beirut (RJ)

08:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

09:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:10 Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:15 Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
13:00 Paris (RJ)
13:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
13:35 Frankfurt (RJ)
14:00 London (RJ)
21:20 Larnaca (RJ)
21:20 Jeddah (RJ)
21:40 Damascus (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:50 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:40 Munich (YP)
14:55 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)
18:05 Kiev (LU)
19:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:30 Cairo (MS)
21:30 Tel Aviv (LY)
22:50 Aden (CY)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)
00:55 Bucharest (RO)
01:25 Jakarta (GA)
03:00 Rome (AZ)
04:40 London (BA)

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
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07:20 Beirut (RJ)

Queen enters World Wide Web

AMMAN (J.T.) — Interested in the history of the women's movement in Jordan? The latest statistics on the state of Jordanian children?

Environmental activism in the Kingdom? Steps taken to preserve the country's architectural and archaeological heritage? That information and more is now available for Internet surfers on the World Wide Web at "www.noor.gov.jo". Her Majesty Queen Noor's Web site.

On a national level the site provides comprehensive and regularly updated synopses on women's organisations, rights, political and labour force participation, health and education as well as the latest activities of the National Task Force for Children and Jordan's achievements in the field of child-welfare.

Visitors to the site can simply click on "architectural heritage" for instant data on sustainable tourism and development at archaeological sites and revitalising Jordan's historic villages and towns.

Her Majesty Queen Noor provides data, answers questions on her new Web site at www.noor.gov.jo.



Environmentalists will enjoy browsing through Jordan's Environmental Strategy and Law as well as national environmental activities and organisations. The section on the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, whose projects promote economic self-reliance, environmental responsibility and participatory decision-making, offers insights as to the role of non-governmental

organisations in Jordan. The Web site, richly illustrated with photographs, has an international dimension as the Queen is actively involved with the U.N. and other organisations working in the fields of education, women and children, community development, human rights, nature and architecture conservation. These numerous projects featured in the site, include the United Nations

University's International Leadership Academy in Jordan, the world's first global leadership training facility, and the United World Colleges, a network of 10 multi-cultural colleges around the world whose equal-opportunity international secondary education programme is designed to foster cross-cultural understanding and global peace.

The highlight is a picture album which spans Queen Noor's childhood, her courtship and subsequent marriage to His Majesty King Hussein, their family and her numerous national and international projects. Visitors are encouraged to fill out the site's inquiry form for more information or they can e-mail the Queen directly at "noor@noor.gov.jo".

The Web site, which was designed by Amman-based Magnet Internet Services, is hosted on the local servers of the National Information Centre (NIC) and Global One/Jordan as well as the servers of Arab Net.

Agreement signed covering treatment of cancer patients from Palestine

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An agreement to provide facilities for treating cancer patients from Palestine was Monday signed between the Palestinian Ministry of Health and Al Amal Centre.

The Palestinian side was represented by Dr. Ibrahim Abid, director in charge of treating Palestinian patients abroad, while the Jordanian side was represented by the rapporteur of Al Amal Centre Board of Trustees, Dr. Abdullah Khatib.

The agreement aims to provide treatment for patients diagnosed with cancer in Palestine by opening Al Amal Centre services to them. Price lists were provided by the Ministry of Health and the Jordan Medical Association.

Al Amal Centre's goal is to provide comprehensive cancer care and services to Jordan and the region; it began offering both in-patient and out-patient services in mid-April of this year.

The centre also strives to contribute to the scientific community at large by conducting and participating in applied research projects and cooperating with other innovative cancer centres around the world.

It is also hosting the "Cancer Appeal for Jordan" on May 28th.

The Cancer Appeal, is a fund-raising initiative on the part of the Anglo-Jor-



Rapporteur of Al Amal Centre Board of Trustees Dr. Abdullah Khatib and Dr. Ibrahim Abid, director in charge of treating Palestinian patients abroad, Monday sign an agreement stipulating the provision of facilities for treating cancer patients from Palestine (Petra photo)

danian Society, established in 1980 and based in England; the society has four patrons, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, HRH Princess Sarvath and the Duke and Duchess of Kent.

The society is organising several events to raise donations for Jordan's fight against cancer and so far over £9,000 has been raised.

"Cancer Appeal" hopes to attract international attention and support for Al Amal Centre through intensive media coverage.

The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), the umbrella of voluntary organisations in

Jordan, formed the National Task Force for the Establishment of Al Amal Centre in 1984.

The centre has concentrated on public awareness programmes and education, by providing educational material and programmes for the public and health professionals.

It also emphasises early detection, through the establishment of a central screening unit, with satellites throughout the country, for early detection of malignant tumours, especially of the breast, uterus, prostate gland, testicles and lungs.

The centre boasts a complete radio-diagnostic divi-

sion, medical laboratories and out-patient clinics in which to effect surgery, chemotherapy, bone marrow transplants, radiotherapy and brachytherapy.

It also emphasises rehabilitation, through physiotherapy, occupational therapy and rehabilitation programmes and counselling for patients and their families.

The centre has a special unit for research and training.

Lastly, it emphasises scientific communication to facilitate information exchanges, expertise and medical consultations with cancer specialists worldwide.

JCAA moves towards commercialisation

By Zeina Durra
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The country's general trend towards privatisation has encouraged the Jordan Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) to seek financial independence and take steps towards commercialisation.

"Financial autonomy, regulatory and oversight functions will remain under the government's jurisdiction but we want to have more financial control," JCAA Director General Captain Jasser Ziade said.

Presently the circa JD 24 million, generated by the JCAA, goes directly to the State Treasury, "we receive only JD 11 million of [this amount which] we generate," he explained. "To add to this we lose large amounts of revenue [due to Royal Jordanian's exemption from landing fees, a loss of approximately JD 6.5 million]."

Captain Ziade feels that semi-privatisation would greatly benefit both the JCAA and the government. "Renovation of existing airport facilities is an inevitability which would put a severe strain on the Jordanian budget. Enlisting the private sector would put the responsibility of renewal in our hands thereby lifting this burden from the government."

In addition, he believes that the income

generated by a commercial airport would be much higher than current levels as "with commercialism comes the inevitable increase in revenue, seen in other international airports which followed this move. Heathrow, Dubai and Tel Aviv are making enormous amounts; for example Tel Aviv generated circa \$150 million last year from non-aeronautical facilities such as Duty Free [shops], this levelled its aeronautical revenue," he maintained.

He described the revenue as beneficial for the Jordanian economy as the predicted profit generated would be far higher than present.

The JCAA has proposed a five-year plan to the government which is currently under consideration.

"In the first five years, we will keep the revenue generated, build upon it and use it to back up our loans, enabling us to finance our commercial projects. After five years, foreign experts predict that we will be able to pay the government dividends of JD four million increasing to JD 10 million after ten years," he said.

A Ministry of Transport official supported Captain Ziade's view stating that "this [move towards semi-privatisation and commercialisation] would do very well."

Ministry outlines forestation plans

AMMAN (J.T.) — In 1998, the Ministry of Agriculture will plant more than 10 million tree saplings in the Wadi Mousa and Shobak regions of southern Jordan in order to implement official forestation plans and stem desertification, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali affirmed Monday.

During a visit to the Ministry of Agriculture, the premier affirmed that the government has endorsed a policy of planting millions of trees in different areas, particularly the eastern and southern regions, in order to make the country verdant by the year 2000, as called for by His Majesty King Hussein.

Ministry of Agriculture nurseries annually plant millions of fruit and evergreen saplings, which it distributes to institutions, schools, the Jordan Armed Forces and other organisations to be planted in various zones.

The prime minister and Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha reviewed national agricultural plans as well as those for developing livestock wealth.

Dr. Majali lauded Jordan's unique climate which he described as conducive to farming development. He referred to student agricultural contributions and encouraged the employment of students during the holidays to help plant trees and reclaim and develop land for food production.

The Ministry of Agriculture will restrict itself to supervising and advising private sector firms wishing to invest in the agricultural sector, he said.

Mr. Khreisha summarised the present agricultural situation in Jordan as well as problems facing the farmers in production and marketing. He also outlined development plans to help Jordan become self-sufficient in food production.

Frost has adversely affected crops grown in the Jordan Valley and damages are estimated at JD 107 million, he added.

Farmers had earlier complained that in some areas their entire crop output was ravaged due to the frost.

These losses prompted the Ministry of Agriculture to appeal to the Rome-based UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to dispatch immediate assistance to the Kingdom and Mr. Khreisha described himself as optimistic that Jordan would soon acquire the petitioned assistance.

'Shopping month' tentatively planned for this summer

AMMAN (Petra) — The advisory council of the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) is currently considering a "shopping month" to be held this summer in order to stimulate the economy and tourism sector and end the economic recession in Jordan, ACC Chairman Haidar Murad announced Monday.

He stated that the chamber has named a special committee to examine the prospects for such a project to be implemented in July when visitors will be coming to spend their holidays in Jordan and attend the Jerash festival for arts and culture.

The idea was enthusiastically welcomed by various tourist and economic experts in the Kingdom as it would offer tourists the chance to shop as well as spend their holidays among relatives and friends, Mr. Murad stated.

He estimated 500,000 persons as expected to visit the Kingdom this year.

The shopping month will resemble similar events organised in Dubai and Lebanon, according to Mr. Murad.

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji has welcomed the idea and is arranging for a meeting this

week to prepare initial steps for the event, Mr. Murad stated.

The ACC will be enlisting the help of the ministries of interior and transport and telecommunications, the Customs Department and Royal Jordanian, he added.

It will also coordinate with hotels, resthouses and commercial industries in order to facilitate the arrival of tourists and ensure the event's success.

Both Dubai and Lebanon have profited from this type of event, Mr. Murad concluded, and Jordan has the potential to secure similar gains.

Elderly woman drowns in unprotected dam

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 96-year old woman Monday drowned in the East Jordan Valley Dam, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials.

One police official told the Jordan Times that the woman, Fatmeh Fallah Hussein, had left her home at approximately 5:30 a.m., and headed to her family's house in Deir Ala when she accidentally fell in the dam.

"According to officials, the empty dam was not surrounded with barbed wire as it was being cleaned."

"Unfortunately, the woman fell in the muddy water and immediately drowned," the source said.

CDD statistics in 1996 reported 77 swimming accidents in which 55 individuals

drowned.

Meanwhile, four people, including one child, were Sunday killed in road accidents, police reports said.

In the Qweismeh area, five-year old Ala'a Jamal was struck by a vehicle and instantly killed, reports said.

In the Marj Al Hamam area of Amman, a 35-year old man was killed when he was run over by a trailer.

The reports said that both drivers were at fault for failing to yield to pedestrians.

A 31-year-old man was also killed when the tractor he was driving in the Quierah area rolled over, according to reports.

Faraj Ahmad was killed instantly in the accident.

In a similar incident Yousef Hassan, 31, died when the trailer he was driving rolled over, official reports stated.

WHAT'S GOING ON

THEATRE

The Jordanian Theatre Company presents "The Last Days of Pompeii" at the Jordanian Theatre, Amman, from May 27 to June 2.

PIANO RECITAL

A piano recital by Amman artist, the Jordanian pianist, will be held at the Jordanian Theatre, Amman, on May 28.

PLAYS

The Jordanian Theatre Company presents "The Last Days of Pompeii" at the Jordanian Theatre, Amman, from May 27 to June 2.

EXHIBITIONS

The Jordanian Theatre Company presents "The Last Days of Pompeii" at the Jordanian Theatre, Amman, from May 27 to June 2.

ABS students travel back in time

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Students at the Amman Baccalaureate School (ABS) celebrated Independence Day with festivities and activities aimed to encourage appreciation of their culture throughout the ages.

"Many students are not cognizant of their rich culture, and resort to living as pseudo-Americans and Europeans," Deputy Head of Teachers Peter Yates said. "We hope this activity stimulates appreciation thereof."

The students initiated their day performing the traditional dabkeh dance, reading Arabic poetry and showcasing traditional Jordanian clothes in a fashion show.

Hanna Habayeh, 13, described students as genuinely interested in the day's activities, which, she said, were informative and fun.

"Everyone initially groaned when we heard of plans for Independence Day but it was really quite fun," she said.

Other activities included bread-making, learning how to plough, and a reenactment of biblical traditions.

A Mahabous baker taught the art of making Saj bread which seemed to be the highlight of the day.

Other students took the opportunity to assist in ploughing, something students otherwise may have never encountered. Head of the Middle School Riham Kassar said.

"Interaction in sessions has been beautiful," Ms. Kassar said.

She explained that the school had originally planned on inviting grandparents to explain the changes they wit-



Young students emulate traditional wedding at Amman Baccalaureate School (photo by Tanya Habjouqa)

nessed over time, but that the idea kept growing.

"So we tapped into the knowledge of elders, friends, and teachers to give students an insight into different aspects of life in Jordan," she said.

A photography exhibit showcased pictures of the Royal family and of the Great Arab Revolt, with history books provided to the students.

A few traditional, colourful

Bani Hamida carpets were also showcased, alongside a simulated shop of the sixties.

Students were able to buy candy for a few piastres, the shop demonstrating the difference in prices then and now.

Shop items included traditional Arab candies, assorted trinkets, and an operational radio from 1951 alongside a typewriter from 1945.

"I searched long and hard for some of these items," ABS

Consultant Zuheir Zakaria said. "One small shopkeeper asked me if I had recently been released from prison, as I did not appear to be familiar with modern items."

A comparative cost of living chart was shown to students, showing typical price variations in medical checks, which, on the average, cost 500 fils in forty years ago and currently averages JD 5.

The ABS also enlisted the aid of 19 Jordanian professors, artists, sociologists, and other professionals to lecture the children on different aspects of life in the Kingdom.

Sociologists Sabri Rbeihat from the Philadelphia University lectured on the change of values from tribalism to modern times, explaining how the transition affected modern living.

"Students seemed interested in humanitarian issues and how the culture has [evolved]," Dr. Rbeihat said.

Archaeologist Nelly Luma introduced students to an outline of Jordan's archaeological history and beseeched the children to take an active role in historical preservation.

"Have your parents buy one less dress and replace that with a book on Jordan's history," she said. "You must learn what treasures you have in your country."

Students were divided into different groups to attend the various activities and lectures.

The seventh grade students gave a theatrical rendition of a traditional Arab wedding, with mensaf, tabba drumming, and dancing.

"This was our way of celebrating Independence Day and educating children about their roots," Ms. Kassar concluded.



Girls call out in traditional bedouin fashion to mark a joyous occasion (photo by Tanya Habjouqa)

2 Lebanese killed as Sierra Leone capital descends into chaos

BEIRUT (AFP) — At least two Lebanese have been killed in the Sierra Leone capital of Freetown, where armed bands are on the rampage following the military coup, officials said here Monday.

"The streets are strewn with the bodies of murdered civilians and we believe there are some Lebanese among them," an Emigrants Ministry official said.

One of the dead Lebanese is the son of a leading businessman in Freetown, the official said.

Lebanon's Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz said he is making contact with authorities in Freetown to ensure the security of some 9,000 Lebanese in Sierra Leone after the overthrow of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah Sunday.

"The Lebanese community, which is mainly based in Freetown, is in a delicate situation because of the reigning insecurity," he told AFP.

Lebanon's ambassador in Freetown, Mohammad Al Zih, said he was fearful of chaos in the capital despite the curfew imposed by the soldiers who seized power in the West African nation.

"Armed gangs have taken control of the streets and are firing non-stop, pillaging homes systematically, particularly those of foreigners, and blowing up the iron gates protecting their property," Mr. Zih said in the Saudi newspaper Asharq Al

Awsar which is also published in Beirut.

Mr. Zih said direct telephone links between Freetown and Lebanon had been cut.

Army major Johnny Paul Korma declared himself head of state in Sierra Leone Monday after seizing power and ousting the government elected only a year ago.

"Maj. Korma said on national radio he overthrew the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah Sunday because of the 'cabals and sectional politics' of the regime. Mr. Kabbah fled by helicopter to neighbouring Guinea.

"We the armed forces, as the custodians of state security, had to step in," he said.

Maj. Korma called for the release of a Sierra Leone rebel leader held in Nigeria, Corporal Foday Sankoh, and called on him to join the new government.

The fresh turmoil in a West African state whose mining-based economy was already shattered by civil war drew condemnation from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Organisation of African Unity Secretary-General Salim Ahmad Salim.

"The United Nations and the international community firmly uphold the principle that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of governments, and that governments, de-

mocratically elected, shall not be overthrown by force," Mr. Annan said, describing himself as "distressed" by the ousting.

Mr. Salim, speaking in Zimbabwe, urged the continent to condemn Sierra Leone's new leaders and not to welcome them into OAU ranks: "It is lamentable that some soldiers who have no mandate to rule at all should decide to challenge the legitimate position of the people. It is a setback for Africa's transition to democracy."

A coup spokesman first announced in a radio broadcast Sunday that junior ranks had toppled Mr. Kabbah and asked Nigerian troops based in the country not to intervene.

One of their first decrees reflected army grievances against Mr. Kabbah, who took over in March 1996 from military rulers who had taken power four years earlier. It abolished a civilian militia on which Mr. Kabbah had come to rely to combat rebels in continuing fighting despite an accord last year ending five years of civil war.

The rebellious troops stormed Freetown's maximum security prison and freed 600 inmates, including soldiers charged with plotting against Mr. Kabbah. Sierra Leone's ambassador to the United States, John Leigh, said the soldiers gave arms to their jailed

colleagues and common criminals to attack government buildings.

"All the aid and all the job I have been doing over here to bring economic development to Sierra Leone are now on hold until this matter is resolved," he said.

State radio announced late Sunday that the country's land borders and air and sea ports were closed until further notice.

The capital Freetown spent the night under a curfew imposed after looting of Lebanese-owned businesses, private homes and United Nations offices and residences.

A U.N. official in New York said some of its local security personnel were seized. The world body has a political office plus aid and development agencies there.

Soldiers battled Nigerian troops stationed in Sierra Leone under regional defence pacts. Nigerian and Guinean troops had supported the government army against rebels, but the radio said all foreign troops had been ordered back to base.

The United States embassy was hit twice by rocket fire, prompting Washington to order its citizens to stay indoors. No one was injured but a White House spokesman said plans were ready for the evacuation of U.S. nationals if necessary.



The wives of ex-Zairean military officers protest Sunday the forced eviction from their homes by the rebels who took the city one week ago. The women say their husbands are to be incorporated into the new rebel army but they are still being evicted from the homes which are within a military base (Reuters photo)

Opposition predicts fresh protests in new Congo

KINSHASA (R) — Opposition activists in Laurent Kabila's Democratic Republic of Congo predicted a stay-home protest in the capital Monday and said they would stage protest marches there later in the week.

But Mr. Kabila's information minister, Raphael Ghenda, told Reuters that even if there was initial backing for such protests it was unlikely to last as the people wanted life to return to normal.

Mr. Kabila's administration, which is only part complete and has shown nervousness over security, acknowledged that this was a problem in the capital and urged the public to give it time and help in dealing with the problem.

Aides to veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who spearheaded internal opposition to ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, said Sunday they wanted proper political dialogue and the departure of foreign troops among Mr. Kabila's forces.

"It's not the party which has ordered this stay-home protest, the people themselves who have decided to stage it," one adviser, Martin Tshibangu Tshimbadi, told Reuters.

Other aides said the opposition would urge its activists to march in the streets of the capital Wednesday and Friday. Opposition activists staged marches last Friday and Saturday.

Frustrated at Mr. Kabila's refusal to name Tshisekedi prime minister last week, they denounce the presence of Rwandan, Ugandan, Burundian, Angolan and other foreign troops among Mr. Kabila's forces.

"Let them go home," one activist told Reuters Sunday. It was a plea echoed by private citizens.

"We want all those who contributed to the struggle to get together to legitimise Mr. Kabila's power," said another.

Mr. Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo marched into Kinshasa on May 17 to crown a seven-month civil war with victory. They took up arms in a dispute over denial of Zairean nationality for ethnic Tutsis.

Mr. Ghenda said people calling stay-home protests were impatient. "They should give us the time to manage the situation in a responsible manner," he added. "Those behind this kind of action are motivated by their selfish interest."

Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo said on state television Sunday the government would do all it could to strengthen its control of the teeming city of five million people.

"There are complaints from all sides that the city is not secure, which is entirely true. We think it is just a matter of giving us a little time to be able to control the city which is so full of evil-doers," he said.

After two days of street protests against his takeover, Mr. Kabila said Saturday that elections in Africa's third largest country would have to wait for two years.

Multinational force will expand patrols in Albania

TIRANA, Albania (AP) — The multinational peace-keeping force in Albania will step up patrols to help ensure security for next month's elections, a spokesman for the force said Saturday.

Premier Bashkim Fino asked the Italian commander of the 6,000-member force to deploy troops to regions of the country it has so far avoided so that candidates can campaign safely and June 29 elections can take place on schedule.

"In the next few days, we plan to expand our forces inside the country, and especially in its northern parts," force spokesman Giovanni Bernardi said Saturday.

The eight-nation European force began arriving in the Balkan nation last month to protect aid deliveries to Albanians left destitute by weeks of turmoil.

The violence, which left at least 500 people dead, flared in January after the collapse of Pyramid investment schemes in which many Albanians held their life savings.

European leaders are bopping the presence of foreign troops and free and fair elections will help resolve the continuing political and economic crisis facing the country.

President Sali Berisha and the main opposition Social Democratic Party agreed last week on guidelines for June 29 elections. Questioning the fairness of the elections, smaller parties are

undecided about whether to participate.

Social Democratic Party leader Skender Gjinushi and other government critics want voter lists scrutinised by foreign election monitors and voting districts redrawn. They also want foreign troops deployed at polling stations.

Mr. Gjinushi and the leaders of seven other parties opposing Mr. Berisha's Democratic Party also want the president to end the state of emergency declared in early March, even though heavily armed gangs continue to roam the country.

"It's ridiculous to campaign when you have a curfew" at 9 p.m., Mr. Gjinushi said.

A spokesman for Mr. Fino said Saturday that Mr. Berisha is expected to sign a decree lifting the emergency measures this weekend.

Although Mr. Berisha has started campaigning for the June 29 vote, opposition to him is high. He scrapped plans Thursday to campaign in the central town of Cerkir, 40 kilometres south of Tirana.

Since violence engulfed the nation earlier this year, heavily-armed rebel committees have controlled most towns in southern Albania.

They said Friday that they would not allow elections in their territories unless conditions were established for a free and fair vote.

Death toll rises to 142 in Indonesian riot

BANJARMASIN, Indonesia (R) — The death toll from a shopping centre fire and riot in this east Kalimantan City on the island of Borneo has risen to 142, the local Dinamika Berita reported Monday.

The paper quoted officials as saying the remains of at least 136 people had been found in a search of the gutted Mitra Plaza Shopping Centre after the complex caught fire following an election-related riot.

Senior police were not immediately available Monday to confirm the report. Some shops have started to reopen, but a number of streets remained closed as troops and police remained on guard ahead of Thursday's poll.

Dinamika Berita said the remains were mostly charred bones and appeared to almost exclusively male.

Officials had said all the shop assistants, most of whom were female, were sent home soon after riots started in the early afternoon when the town's shops closed up.

Another two bodies had been found in both the Lima Cahaya shopping complex and Sarikaya Supermarket,

while two people died as a result of stabbing wounds, it added.

Most of the bodies in the Mitra Plaza were found in the Siola Department Store, many with sharp weapons nearby, while others were located in a Hero Supermarket, Hero JK, Gramedia Bookstore, Texas Fried Chicken and Century 21 Cinema.

Authorities have said that the victims, who entered the building and set it alight after dark when the city was blacked out, were all looters trapped by the flames after they fled into the city after riot police and troops quickly

Dinamika Berita quoted unnamed officials as saying they expected the death toll to rise as they say they have not yet had an opportunity to search the Hotel Kalimantan and the Jukung Buih Shopping Complex below it in the city centre.

The Banjarmasin Post reported Monday that 164 had been reported missing to city police who had detained 181 people, mostly on looting related crimes.



President Aleksander Kwasniewski and his wife Jolanta cast their votes in Poland's constitutional referendum at a Warsaw polling station Sunday. Poles adopted a new constitution, sponsored by the ruling ex-Communists and other parliamentary parties. The constitution is meant to enshrine rights and liberties gained with the fall of Communist rule in 1989 and to stabilise the democratic changes made since then (Reuters photo)

Polish poll verdict is setback for Solidarity

WARSAW (R) — Exit polls indicating that voters approved Poland's new constitution in a referendum were an ominous sign for the rightist opposition as it prepares to challenge the ruling ex-Communists in elections this year.

Many analysts saw Sunday's referendum as a trial of strength between the ex-Communist Democratic Left Alliance, which helped to draft the charter, and the opposition Solidarity Election Action (AWS) before parliamentary polls due around September.

"The referendum has to a large extent been a test of strength," sociologist Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski told Reuters. "Solidarity's...defeat shows it may have difficulty mobilising part of its electorate."

Exit polls, released by public television, said 56.8 per cent of the people backed the constitution and 43.2 per cent opposed it on a turnout of 39.8 per cent of the 28 million voters.

Opinion polls suggest that both the Solidarity alliance and the ex-Communists have the support of more than one fifth of potential voters, which under Poland's electoral system would translate into about a third of the seats in the 460-member

parliament.

They also indicate that the AWS, a bloc of more than 30 small parties led by the Solidarity Union, has the greater potential to win more votes because many Poles still despise the ruling party's roots in the oppressive Communist system overthrown in 1989.

But the referendum result appeared to show that Solidarity's campaign rhetoric, which in the case of the constitution relied more on vague patriotic and religious values and strong anti-Communism than specific arguments, had limited appeal.

"Solidarity's...defeat may largely be due to its dramatic tone, which is unsuitable for the current reality. We saw an appeal to emotions and not to reason and most people do not get carried away just by emotions," said Wnuk-Lipinski.

Solidarity leaders claimed that the constitution betrayed national interests by allowing Poland to surrender by treaty some functions to international organisations.

They also said it should be rejected because it did not clearly invoke God and include a clause effectively banning abortion, now legal in Poland.

Some Solidarity leaders

asked the Roman Catholic Church last month to seek God's help in defeating the constitution by performing the ceremony of "enthroning Christ the King," a step last taken when Bolshevik troops invaded Poland in 1920.

The church refused, but the episode was a gift to Solidarity's critics and was widely ridiculed.

"They (Solidarity) abuse references to God and the church in their campaign. People, even their own supporters, do not like it... this is one reason for the defeat," said Andrzej Potocki, spokesman for the opposition Union for Freedom Party.

Mr. Potocki's centrist party was one of the opposition groups which reached a compromise with the ruling coalition of ex-Communists and a Peasant Party and helped to pass the constitution in parliament.

The party argued that it was better to have an imperfect constitution than stay with remnants of the 1952, Stalin-era one, amended in 1992 by interim laws, that would leave Poland as the only former Soviet Bloc country without a new charter.

Return of all Serbs unreasonable — Tudjman

ZAGREB (R) — Croatian President Franjo Tudjman stood firm Sunday against growing Western pressure for all displaced Croatian Serbs to be allowed to return safely to their pre-war homes and said such demands were unreasonable.

Western ambassadors joined together Friday to express concern to Mr. Tudjman over the slow and problem-ridden return of ethnic Serbs. The move followed reports of harassment and expulsion of elderly Serbs in central Croatia.

Up to 200,000 Serbs fled their rebel Krajina enclave ahead of its recapture by Croatian army in 1995 and only a few have returned, to find their houses destroyed and property confiscated.

"They speak only of the problem of returning Serb refugees. I told those gentlemen it is unacceptable to forget... our own refugees have been away from home for six years," Mr. Tudjman said in an interview carried by state radio and television.

The 75-year old president, reported to be ill with cancer, is likely to win a second term in office on June 15 presidential election.

"We said we would solve the problem of the return of Serb refugees who are in eastern Slavonia," he said, referring to the last Serb enclave, administered by the United Nations, where there are some 60,000 Serb refugees from the Krajina.

"But to make conditions and say we have to take back all the Serbs who left Croatia is unreasonable. It is contrary to everything that's been happening in the world ever since its beginning," he said.

"No one is making demands that all Sudeten Germans go back," said Mr. Tudjman, referring to ethnic Germans who left Communist Czechoslovakia after World War II.

U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith made his strongest public criticism of Zagreb yet earlier this week when he said the United States would only support Croatia's integration into Western institutions with preconditions which include Croatia permitting the return of all refugees and displaced persons.



The Hong Kong protest boat "Diao Yu Tai" collides with a Japanese patrol boat of Japan's Maritime Safety Agency during a protest over Tokyn's claiming to a disputed island chain near the Senkakus, known in Chinese as Diaoyus, in the East China Sea Monday. The Japanese Coast Guard deployed about 60 patrol boats Monday to prevent a flotilla of some 20 protest vessels from Taiwan and Hong Kong from approaching the island (Reuters photo)

Chinese activists flout Japan near disputed isles

TAIPEI (R) — A flotilla of Chinese nationalists determined to challenge Tokyo's claim to an East China Sea archipelago faced off Monday with Japanese patrol boats in waters around the disputed islands.

Some 200 Taiwan and Hong Kong activists aboard fishing boats that sailed overnight from Taiwan confronted a phalanx of Japanese Coast Guard ships as they circled the islets claimed by Japan as the Senkakus and by Taiwan and China as the Diaoyus.

"They are being surrounded by Japanese coastal patrol vessels," Taiwan state radio said, describing the encounters as peaceful on the basis of shipboard witnesses' reports.

Working methodically, two Japanese patrols were assigned to them in each of the four groups of boats, designed to make any landing attempt extremely difficult.

The radio said. Eight crew from a fishing boat operating near the protest abandoned their damaged ship early Monday and were in life rafts awaiting rescue by Japanese patrols, Taiwan Radio said. The incident appeared to be unrelated to the protest.

There were conflicting reports of the precise location of the confrontation. Taiwan Radio said the flotilla reached to 12 nautical miles of the islands about 200 kilometres north-east of Taiwan, or within what Japan regards as its territorial waters, but had been pushed back to around 15 nautical miles.

In Tokyo, Japan's Maritime Safety Agency said 20 protest boats had sailed to within 44 kilometres south-west of the islands, where a force of 60 patrol boats warned them not to enter Japanese waters or to approach the uninhabited

islands. In October, after a similar flotilla of Chinese nationalists from Taiwan and Hong Kong pierced Japan's defences and clambered victoriously onto the rocky outcrops, Tokyo vowed to take more effective measures to thwart future landings.

Early Monday, the Taiwan and Hong Kong activists vowed to carry out what they dubbed the "Diaoyu island World Cup Fishing Contest," a protest designed to challenge Japan's sovereignty by violating what it claims as its waters.

The activists would not rule out landing on the islands and said on their departure that they would seek Taiwan's help if Japan interfered in their protest.

Singing, beating drums and flying flags of the United States and Taiwan's exiled Republic of China, the activists set sail Sunday despite Tokyo's vow to prevent any landings and Taipei's warning that activities other than commercial fishing were not allowed outside of Taiwan's coastal waters.

The chain has ignited fiery nationalist passions in Chinese communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States since a Japanese right-wing group built a makeshift lighthouse there in July 1996, a move they said bolstered Japan's sovereignty.

A Hong Kong activist drowned in September when he jumped from a protest boat into stormy waters during an abortive voyage to reach the islands. Japan took the islands as war booty after defeating imperial China in 1895. Despite their deep differences, Communist China, and Nationalist Taiwan agree that the islands should have been returned after Japan's World War II defeat.

Afghan Taliban tell Shiites to talk or fight

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Taliban Islamic government in Afghanistan told an opposition Shiite faction biding a central province to sit down to immediate peace talks or face attack.

A Taliban spokesman, quoted by a Pakistan-based Afghan news service, said the Purist Islamic movement had sent a message to the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat faction in Bamian province to send a delegation to the capital for talks.

"But we have told them that if (the talks) were delayed, then we will enter Bamian by force, and then Hezb-i-Wahdat will be responsible for any bloodshed," the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted spokesman Abdul Wakil as saying by telephone from the southern Afghan town of Kandahar.

It quoted Mohammad Rasul Taleb, a Wahdat spokesman in the northwestern Pakistani town of Peshawar, as saying that his faction had always stood for peace and would try to hold talks with the Taliban.

But he would not say whether Wahdat, a partner in an anti-Taliban alliance, would send a delegation to Kabul.

Taliban forces have been meeting stiff Wahdat resistance in their attempts to enter Namiyan.

Mr. Wakil said the Taliban, who claimed the capture of five opposition-controlled provinces in northern Afghanistan at the weekend along with their new ethnic Uzbek allies, wanted to bring all areas under their Islamic government peacefully.

Pakistan, which Sunday became the first country to recognise the Taliban government, has sent its ambassador to Afghanistan, Aziz Khan, to reopen his embassy, which has been closed since September 1995.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan told a news conference Sunday that Islamabad had previously withheld recognition to give time for the promotion of a broad-based government through peaceful negotiations.

But he said the Taliban government was "genuinely comprises various ethnic groups in Afghanistan." The government was set up last September when the Islamic militia captured the capital Kabul and now controls 26 of the country's 32 provinces, the minister said.

Opposition leader General Abdul Rashid Dostum, ousted from his fiefdom in northern Afghanistan Saturday, arrived in the Turkish capital of Ankara Sunday, vowing to continue his struggle for the control of his country.

The Taliban advance ended an eight-month deadlock between them and a fragile coalition linking Gen. Dostum with the forces of ousted Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami and the Hezb-i-Wahdat.

The alliance forces are now in tatters and stranded from supply lines in the Hindu Kush Mountains. But Wahdat has put up resistance in Bamian and former government military commander Ahmad Shah Masood holds part of the northeast.

Meanwhile, Iran has attacked what it called foreign interference in Afghanistan and said only negotiations among rival factions could restore peace to the ravaged country.

"The Afghan crisis has no military solution... From its very outset, Iran has maintained that the crisis could be resolved by the people of that country," the official Iranian news agency (IRNA) quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as saying Sunday night.

news agency (IRNA) quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as saying Sunday night.

Mr. Mohammadi said "the interferences into Afghanistan's internal affairs by certain foreign countries cannot solve the problems and those who think that by adopting such policies they can solve the crisis are not only repeating the historical mistakes but also imposing their will on the Afghan people."

Mr. Mohammadi did not name the foreign countries, but Iran in the past accused Pakistan of supporting the Taliban movement.

Shiite Muslim Iran supported the previous Kabul government ousted by the Sunni Taliban, which it accused of giving Islam a bad name by its harsh interpretation of Islamic Law.

"Mohammadi said the only way to restore peace in Afghanistan was negotiations between the different groups and formation of a broad-based government comprising all ethnic and political groups of Afghanistan," IRNA said.

Iran said it was not ready to recognise the Taliban. President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Sunday Tehran would wait until the United Nations recognised the Taliban government in Kabul.

An official close to Mr. Rabbani said Monday the ousted Afghan President is in neighbouring Tajikistan after the Taliban militia took the northern Afghan town of Mazar-i-Sharif last week.

Rabbani and several members of his cabinet are now in the town of Kulyah in Tajikistan's south. The source told Reuters by telephone from the Tajik capital Dushanbe, but gave no date of Mr. Rabbani's arrival.

The official told Reuters that Commander Masood was now holed up in the Panjsher Valley in northern Afghanistan but gave no further details.

The source said hundreds of refugees had begun to arrive in the former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan.

"So far several hundred Afghan refugees have arrived in Kulyah... As for northern Afghanistan, in many regions locals hailed the advance of the Taliban and raised its white flags," the source said.

Tajikistan and the other ex-Soviet states of Central Asia have voiced fears that militant, Taliban-style Islam could spread northwards across their borders. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan all share borders with the war ravaged state.

Tajikistan's defence and security ministries held an urgent meeting at the weekend, discussing measures to reinforce the Afghan border and prevent a massive influx of refugees. The republic is itself reeling from a bitter four-year civil war. A fragile peace secured last December is often rattled by maverick armed hands and drug traders acting out of bases in Afghanistan.

Russia, which is separated from Afghanistan by more than 1,000 kilometres of Central Asian territory, has about 20,000 troops stationed in Tajikistan.

They guard the republic's remote, mountainous border with Afghanistan and view themselves as a shield against Islamic fundamentalism.

A statement issued by Uzbekistan's Foreign Ministry Sunday said that Uzbek border troops were "taking measures to reinforce the Afghan border to exclude any provocations."

Sri Lanka troops secure new positions after battle

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops, slowed by fierce counter-attacks by separatist Tamil rebels, were consolidating their positions in the freshly captured northern territory, military officials in the north said Monday.

They said troops, who resumed their drive on the weekend after a five-day pause and advanced further north of the former rebel-controlled Omanthal, were building fortifications and organising supplies before moving again.

"There is no fighting today," a Defence Ministry spokesman said in Colombo.

Military officials in the north added that there was no fighting overnight after fierce clashes on the weekend, during which several soldiers and rebels were killed.

The Defence Ministry said troops had moved three kilometres north of Omanthal to Rambaikulam over the weekend.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels had destroyed a T-55 tank and an armoured troop carrier during the battle for Rambaikulam Saturday.

Security forces captured Omanthal, 14 kilometres north of the government-held town of Vavuniya, and Nedunkeni, 25 kilometres northeast of Vavuniya, last week after a two-pronged thrust into the LTTE's northern Wanni heartland.

The Defence Ministry said 14 soldiers were killed and 19 others wounded in the fighting at Rambaikulam. No casualties were reported from sporadic rounds of artillery and mortars fired by the rebels Sunday, it added.

Ground troops have confirmed more than 30 rebels were killed and more than 75 wounded in the day's fighting, it said. Military officials said troops were now planning to move

ahead of Rambaikulam towards the rebel-held Puliyankulam.

Some 20,000 troops launched "Operation Jaya Sikuru," or "Sure Of Victory," from Vavuniya on May 13 in a bid to open a supply route to the Jaffna peninsula, 100 kilometres further north. Vavuniya lies 220 kilometres north of the capital Colombo.

Government forces rely on air and sea links to supply bases and civilians in Jaffna, the LTTE's former homeland would be brought back under government control one year ago.

The LTTE, fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in mainly Sinhalese Sri Lanka's north and east, has accused Colombo of killing Tamil civilians and destroying their property under the pretext of opening a supply route.

A statement issued by the rebels' International Secretariat in Loodoo said they had lost 13 fighters in the battle for Rambaikulam Saturday.

Intelligence sources in the east said that the LTTE were urging people in rebel-held areas to donate blood to treat wounded fighters.

Meanwhile, suspected LTTE rebels blew up two huge power pylons near Trincomalee, some 240 kilometres east of the capital Colombo, late Sunday, plunging the area in darkness.

Casualty figures released by the Defence Ministry indicated 89 soldiers had died in the 13-day offensive, one of the military's biggest in the 13-year-old ethnic war. About 145 soldiers had been wounded in the offensive.

Hospital sources said some 600 soldiers were wounded.

The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, but the LTTE says the toll is higher.

U.S.-France row persists as Albright starts Euro-tour

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The dispute between the United States and France over who will head NATO's Southern Command has eased but is not about to be resolved soon, the State Department said as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright arrives in Paris for a weeklong tour of Europe.

"The U.S. position has not changed," said spokesman Nicholas Burns, travelling with Mrs. Albright to Paris. Even though the controversy "is not going to be resolved soon," Mr. Burns said, the disagreement between the two allies is "no longer at the boiling point."

The United States insists on having a U.S. officer in charge of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) Southern Command, based in Naples, Italy, and responsible for the vast Mediterranean basin.

France, which pulled out of NATO's integrated military structure in 1966, has made its return conditional on an overhaul of NATO that would more equitably split command duties between U.S. and senior European officers.

Washington refuses to cede control of the Mediterranean and command of its powerful fleet, which includes aircraft carriers.

The future of NATO's Southern Command will be on the table as Mrs. Albright and French Foreign Minister Hervé De Charette meet at midday Monday.

U.S. commanders have been quoted as arguing that, as a non-European country, it would be better placed to play a conciliatory role when tensions flare in the area.

France has suggested a split of command duties in Naples, with a European territorial commander and a U.S. operational commander.

"There is no crisis in U.S.-French relations," Mr. Burns said. There is "very good understanding" between the two countries about most key international issues.

Other key issues Mrs. Albright and Mr. De Charette will cover include the situation in Bosnia, events in the Middle East, the new government in the newly renamed Democratic Republic of Congo, and relations with Russia.

Late Monday Mrs. Albright is scheduled to have a "private" dinner with her Russian counterpart, Yevgeny Primakov. The two will discuss the process of NATO enlargement, relations between NATO and Russia, and events in Bosnia, Mr. Burns said.

On Tuesday Mrs. Albright will sign a NATO agreement with Russia that allows former East Bloc nations into the Western alliance.

NATO leaders will extend their first invitations to Central European countries. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are expected to become the first entrants.

While Russia still opposes NATO enlargement, Washington feels the groundwork has been laid for discussion and that the alliance may even consider extending membership to Russia some day.

On Wednesday Mrs. Albright is scheduled to be in the Hague for ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after World War II.

On Thursday and Friday she will be in Sintra, Portugal, near Lisbon, for the semi-annual meeting of NATO foreign ministers.

Over the weekend Mrs. Albright is scheduled to travel to Sarajevo, the Serb stronghold of Banja Luka and the flashpoint of Brcko on May 31 and June 1.

Colombian army seizes Maoist rebel chief

BOGOTA (R) — The leader of Colombia's third largest guerrilla group was captured Sunday as he rested at a farm near the north-west city of Medellin, army intelligence sources said.

Damario Jose Vargas, alias "Damielo," was a political chief of the Maoist-inspired People's Liberation Army (EPL) in 1977 and took full control of the rebel force in June 1994.

Following the arrest of then-leader Francisco Carralillo.

Mr. Vargas, who faces charges of terrorism and rebellion, was also the EPL's delegate to the so-called Simon Bolivar guerrilla umbrella group, a rebel front set up in 1987 and dominated by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Latin America's largest and oldest guerrilla army.

Miriam Cristina Motoyola, alias "Gabriela," was arrested with Mr. Vargas at the farm in Girardota, just northeast of Medellin.

Army sources said she was thought to be a member of the EPL's general secretariat.

Large quantities of "subversive" documents and EPL records were confiscated, a spokesman for army intelligence said.

The arrests were the latest blow to the EPL, set up in 1967. Last year some 200 EPL fighters deserted and surrendered to the feared right-wing paramilitary group, the Peasant Self-Defence Group of Cordoba and Uraba (ACCU).

The majority of EPL rebels laid down their arms under the terms of a government-backed peace deal in 1991. Political analysts believe they have dwindled to less than 800 insurgents.

China slams Japan-U.S. alliance

BEIJING (R) — China Monday slammed Japan's military alliance with the United States, accusing the two allies of targeting Beijing and warning of a resurgence in Japanese militarism.

"The long-term goal (of the alliance) is to deal with the imaginary troubles made by an economically and militarily stronger China," the official China Daily quoted Zhao Jieqi, a research fellow of the Institute of Japanese Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, as saying.

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto visited the United States in April and assured U.S. President Bill Clinton that Tokyo was not seeking a cut in American military forces in Japan and Asia. There are currently 100,000 U.S. troops in Asia.

Mr. Hashimoto backed continued U.S. military presence in Japan, despite calls for reductions by residents of Japan's island of Okinawa, where the bulk of U.S. military facilities are located.

The China Daily also denounced the planned revision of the 1978 Japan-U.S. joint "defence guidelines" for security cooperation. It is expected to be updated by autumn this year.

"The redefined U.S.-Japan security agreement helps set the tiger out of the cage," the newspaper quoted Liu Jiangyong, director of the Department of North East Asian Studies of the Chinese Contemporary International Relations Institute, as saying in the same article.

China, one of several Asian countries victimised by Japanese aggression during World War II, harbours deep suspicions of any Japanese military build-up.

"Japan... can burst its shackles and develop military strength without much restraint," Mr. Liu said.

"Considering Japan's unrepentant attitude towards its militarist past, it is clear that China and other victims of Japan's invasion war will have cause for increased worry," the newspaper said.

The newspaper lambasted the United States for backing China's rival Taiwan. "If the United States did not act as the 'protector' and sell weapons to Taiwan, the pro-Taiwan independence force would not become more rampant," the newspaper said.

Beijing views Taiwan as a rebel province and has threatened to invade if the island declares independence.

Taiwan's Nationalists, who lost the Chinese Civil War and fled to the island in 1949, say they are committed to reunification but under democracy and a

free-market economy.

"Military alliances that want to encircle China and prevent it 'from using force in the Taiwan Straits' are solidifying," Mr. Liu said.

China ruffled regional feathers in March, 1996, when it conducted missile tests and war games off Taiwan in the run-up to the island's first direct presidential elections.

Washington responded by sending a naval battle group to the Taiwan Strait to monitor activities there, a move that drew angry condemnation from Beijing as interference in China's internal affairs.

"If the United States really wants to see peace and stability in this region, it should... not stick its nose in China's domestic affairs," the newspaper said.

"The United States hopes to see Asians bite Asians so it can hold its leading position in Asia-Pacific affairs," Mr. Liu said.

Beijing suspects that Washington, seeking to shore up its position as the world's lone superpower, advocates a policy of containing China's economic and military development.

Washington maintains it is pursuing a policy of engagement with Beijing but some U.S. officials have said China's potential economic power and military build-up could endanger regional stability in the future.

6 killed in Florida skydiving plane crash

MIAMI (R) — Six people were killed when a small plane carrying a sky-diving team plunged into a field near the Florida Everglades Sunday, a Fire and Rescue Department spokeswoman said.

One woman survived the disaster. She was about to jump when the Cessna plane began to spin, and she parachuted to the ground safely, Laverne Guillen of the Metro-Dade Fire and Rescue Department said.

Home video taken by a bystander showed the plane spinning downwards. It smashed down into a sweet potato field while the woman skydiver was still making her descent and watching in horror.

"The whole plane was engulfed in flames by the time we got there. It was found that six people had perished," Ms. Guillen said.

Among those killed was the owner of the company, Skydivers Inc. The accident occurred shortly after the plane had taken off from the homestead airfield south of Miami just before 2 p.m. EDT

(1800 GMT). Ms. Guillen said.

The woman survivor was unburt. Too shocked to talk to reporters, she was escorted away by police. Ms. Guillen said she was 43 years old and had completed 23 jumps. Her name was not released.

An investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, Jeff Kennedy, told reporters on the scene that the probe would focus on whether the Cessna 205 was overloaded.

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Hoping for better future

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein this week lent strong support for the proposal made by President Hosni Mubarak to establish with great urgency an Arab common market that would cement inter-Arab relations. The Egyptian president's proposal was unveiled during his summit with the King in Aqaba Saturday. President Mubarak reminded the Arab World, and rightly so, that although their quest for an economic union materialised a long time before its European equivalent, the Europeans succeeded in their endeavour while the Arabs failed.

Although the Arabs are joined by the Arab League, including its different organs, the Arab capitals have done very little, if any, to promote this vital scheme. Perhaps their failure is understandable given the nature of inter-Arab relations, where for decades that politics rather than economic ties determined joint Arab action or the lack of it. Neither the Arab League nor its adjunct, the Arab Economic Council, ever succeeded in forging an Arab consensus on any level much less on the economic front. Time and again, economic ties have been made hostage to political considerations. The establishment of an Arab common market in the absence of Arab political maturity, therefore, is tantamount to putting the cart before the horse.

Meanwhile, the opposition that many Arab capitals put against the idea of a new Middle East, that groups not only the Arab World but Israel, Turkey and Iran, should at the time being be translated into open borders between the Arab countries.

In this regard the least that the rich countries of the Gulf can do, for example, is to open their markets for labour coming from the poorer Arab countries.

But most important of all, it must be noted that Europe succeeded in forging economic unity way ahead of any political unity because there is an operational democracy in each of the countries of Western Europe. While some Arab countries started experimenting with democracy, many are still ruled by totalitarian regimes. What the Arabs urgently need is to introduce pluralistic democracy as a prelude to attaining any sort of unity.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Arah Al Yawm said that successive Jordanian governments have always sought to impose their hegemony on the legislative authority, with the purpose of securing the people's approval of all its actions without any opposition. Suleiman Arar, who is also head of Al Mustaqbal Party, said that the present government exploited its right to pass temporary laws in the absence of Parliament and has introduced amendments to the Press and Publications Law to subdue the press and stifle any form of opposition to the executive authority. This is a government prerogative, to be exercised in emergencies only and when no further delay can be allowed to safeguard public interest, he noted. But the government chose to pass the amendments at this juncture in order to suppress the weekly papers which, alone, continue to voice opposition to the government's practices since the state controls the radio, television and the daily newspapers, according to the writer. The amendments to the law are bound to deprive the Jordanians of the right to read about abuses of authority on the part of officials and cases of corruption, and they are similar to those laws passed under the previous martial law, he added. The writer said that the amendments tend to render the fledgling democracy in Jordan void of its content and spirit.

A WRITER for the weekly Al Bilad criticised statements by the secretary general of the Islamic Action Front Party (IAF), Ishaq Farhan, who, in a lecture designed to win support for his party in the coming general elections, said his party would give the workers 50 per cent of the shares of the companies they are working for. Ziyad Abu Ghanimeh said this is clearly part of the IAF's campaign to win votes, but the idea can by no means be implemented. By saying that if the IAF formed a government, it would offer the shares to the workers, Dr. Farhan is committing the party to something that it can never carry out since it means that the state would have to compensate the shareholders with hundreds of millions of dinars for their shares and the country would have to resort to further borrowing and increasing its debts, said the writer. If Dr. Farhan is genuinely concerned about the workers' affairs, he should set a good example to others by starting now to give 50 per cent of his own shares in the numerous institutions where he holds equity, like the Zarqa Private University, the Arab Community College, the Jordan Women University, and others, said the writer. He said Dr. Farhan should respect the intelligence of the public before issuing big statements.

The View from Fourth Circle

Of fish swimming, scribes scribbling and governments making laws

IN THE famous 6th century mosaic map of the Holy Land in the Church of St. George in Madaba, there is a wonderful depiction of fish swimming back to the north, against the natural flow of the Jordan River. They do this because they are trying to avoid certain death in the very salty waters of the Dead Sea. Given the recent developments in the press field in Jordan and Palestine, one wonders: would a mosaicist making such a map today depict some scribes heading away from the east and west banks of the Jordan River?

The mass media in Jordan and Palestine are passing through challenging times, given the Jordanian government's sudden, extra-parliamentary implementation of the temporary press law, and the Palestinian National Authority's detention of the very respected journalist Daoud Kuttab in Ramallah. Why should these press issues in Palestine and Jordan interest anyone other than the immediate families of those concerned? Because the condition of the mass media in the lands flanking the Jordan River signals much about the future prospects for democracy and for sensible, responsive and responsible governance in the wider Middle East. Jordan and Palestine are particularly appropriate cases to monitor because in recent years both, in their distinct ways, have represented widespread public hopes for examples or even models of Arab political systems based on freedom, participation, accountability and dignity.

I will only address here the Jordanian government's imposition of the temporary press law, which is the more complex of these two cases in the Holy Land this month. Most political figures in Jordan who have spoken out about the law have criticised it strongly; a few energetic government officials have defended it with emotional and intellectual passion, and the vast majority of all Jordanians have ignored it. This combination of political attitudes should alert us to the fact that this controversy is really about two distinct but related issues: the moral and professional conduct of the mass media and the political conduct of the government. Both are now before the court of public opinion, as they should be in an honourable, democratising country like Jordan.

The criticisms of the content of the law are clear and reasonable: there is too much vagueness in the prohibition of "news, views, opinions, analysis, information, reports, caricatures, photos or any sort of publication that disparages" the King and Royal family, the security forces, and heads of friendly states, or that threatens national security or endangers the national currency; the relevant fines of 15,000-25,000 dinars (\$22,000-\$37,000) for such misdeeds will have a chilling effect on the media; raising the minimum capital requirements of weekly newspapers from JD 15,000 to 300,000 dinars (nearly \$450,000) within three months

will drive most of the lively new weeklies out of business (while the wealthier dailies will be able to handle their even higher capital increases).

Supporters of the new law say that it will "raise the ceiling of freedom" of the press by putting total responsibility for judging the press' behaviour in the hands of the courts, thus ending the habit of the information ministry itself of unilaterally closing publications or punishing writers or editors who have been judged by the government to have transgressed the law. Strengthening the role of the courts in judging the mass media's adherence to the law is a good move, in principle. The government anticipates that the mass media will become more professional, more responsible and more commercially sound. That's probably true, though the danger is that the capital requirements and potentially chilling restrictions on writing may not leave us with much mass media to speak of besides the mainstream dailies (whose government shareholdings remain intact), the state-owned television, radio and news agency, and innocuous weekly and monthly magazines on spots, fashion, cooking and other such topics.

I also argue against the new law because of its unnecessary use of overkill: it used a bulldozer to kill some bad weeds in an otherwise healthy garden, when all it required was some judicious use of legal herbicides and pesticides to reduce the problem plants and thus strengthen the rest of the garden.

Far more important than the arguments for and against the provisions of the new law is the unfortunate manner in which it came into being through the government's use of its power to pass temporary laws when parliament is not in session. This was perfectly legal, in strictly legal terms; but it was politically wrong in the larger view of things. In countries like Jordan, that are undergoing gradual democratisation, the real, full test of any political act is not only whether it is legal, but also whether in its spirit and impact it promotes greater dialogue, accountability, consensus-building, trust and credibility in our fundamental institutions of governance. In this case, the government's actions have not pushed us towards these goals.

In fact, we seem to have repeated with this press law the same sort of combination of political haste and heavy-handedness that we experienced last year in the previous government's moves to restructure grain subsidies and thus raise bread and many other prices. In both the bread and mass media cases, the Jordanian government had a compelling case to take action and it also had the support of the majority of people and political forces. Yet the government's political performance in both cases was democratically unimpressive and perhaps even regressive in terms of furthering genuine political modernisation and pluralism in Jordan.

This month's mass media case was a valuable opportunity for the state to promote real democratic decision making by translating the clear consensus in the country into a new law that would curb the excesses of those few offending weeklies that have jarred Jordan's moral sensibilities or national interest. The government would have been much wiser to hold political discussions with parliament, opposition forces, the Press Association and others in society in order for parliament to pass selective, well-targeted changes in the law. Such a strategy would have been widely supported and applauded by an overwhelming majority in the country. Such an approach would have redressed the excesses of those few weirdoes and wild spirits in the mass media, strengthened democratic rule in the country, fostered more national unity and pride, enhanced the credibility of the national unity and legislative branches of government, and pushed Jordan forward yet again as an example of how political modernisation can and must take place in the Third World. It is a shame that all this did not happen, and doubly so since it did not happen for the second time in two years, with two successive and very different governments.

In the face of important national issues, the last two governments seemed unable, unwilling or merely unaware of the importance of having to make the sort of fundamental compromises that are at the heart of the democratic political culture. The governments made up their minds, laid down the law and enforced it through the constitutional provisions that make such unilateral behaviour lawful. They passed the test of what is constitutionally permissible; but they may have failed the test of what is politically healthiest for the country in the long run. There cannot be two prime ministers as different in political instincts and attitude as Abdul Karim Kabariti and Abdul Salam Majali; why, then, did their governments react in the same way to such profound political challenges and opportunities? Does this tell us something deeper about the complexities of the transition from old ways to new?

The fish swimming against the Jordan River's natural current in the Madaba mosaic map are permanently burned into the historical record as a valiant example of the instinctive biological will for life, freedom and dignity. We do not know if the fish ever escaped a slow, miserable death in the salty waters of the Dead Sea, or instead found life and peace in the fresh waters of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. Their desperate quest is a reminder, perhaps, of the intensity of the biological will for life, the timelessness of the instinct for liberty and the universality and vitality of these two attributes in the blessed lands astride the River Jordan. Many other people in the Middle East look to our lands for signs and signals — about the direction of swimming fish, scribbling scribes, law-making governments and transforming cultures.

The difference between Likud and Labour — no 'big deal'

By Uri Avnery

The writer heads the Peace Bloc. The following article is reprinted from The Jerusalem Post.

IMAGINE THE following statement by the Catholic Church: "The Church grants scientists the right to determine the shape of the earth, and does not rule out the possibility that the earth is round."

Had the church passed such a decision in Galileo's time, it would have been recorded as a bizarre joke of history.

Such was the nature of Labour's recent resolution which recognised the Palestinians' right to self-determination, without ruling out the possibility of a Palestinian state.

Kudos to the Labour Party! A mere 30 years late, it has finally acknowledged that the earth is round and that it revolves around the sun.

In Galileo's words: And yet it moves. Even the Labour Party moves, from time to time.

Labour's resolution does not take the trouble to specify the border between Israel and a Palestinian state, so its proponents could easily support Israel's annexation of half of the West Bank. What matters to Labour is that those patchwork remnants ultimately left under Palestinian control, surrounded by Jewish settlements and bypass roads, may be referred to as a Palestinian state.

About a year and a half after the 1967 war, I was

contacted by ambassador Moshe Sasson, officially known as "the prime minister's representative in the territories." He said Levi Eshkol had requested that Sasson speak with me.

This request had been preceded by a serious confrontation I had had in the Knesset with Eshkol and Moshe Dayan. I announced that I had met with the leaders of the West Bank, and that every single one supported the idea of a Palestinian state. Eshkol and Dayan categorically denied that this could be true. Nevertheless, shortly thereafter Eshkol sent Sasson to meet with me, in order to debrief me on my meetings with the West Bank leaders.

We met in the Knesset cafeteria on Nov. 19, 1968.

Afterwards, Sasson, briefing the prime minister on our conversation, wrote: "There were no significant differences between my evaluations and those of Mr. Avnery." In other words, the West Bank leadership did indeed want a Palestinian state.

"However," continued the report, "neither Mr. Avnery nor I could point to a single West Bank leader willing to support the idea of a Palestinian state without Jerusalem." Avnery agreed with my assessment that the question of sovereignty over an Arab capital in Jerusalem is a pivotal question. Sasson therefore ruled out the possibility that Israel would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Almost three decades

later, it seems that Labour hasn't learned a thing. The resolution not to rule out a Palestinian state is a sorry anachronism. In the absence of willingness to agree on Jerusalem as the capital of both states and to recognise the Green Line as the border between the two states, it is deceptive and shameful.

Let's face it: The Palestinian state is already a de facto entity. The Palestinian territories have taken on the distinct characteristics of a sovereign state, with a flag, a parliament, a president, a government, laws, a judicial system, armed forces and embassies worldwide.

Dozens of countries already officially recognise the Palestinian state; many others regard it as a state for all practical purposes. Every

visit there by a foreign leader, every visit Yasser Arafat makes to a foreign capital is accompanied by official state ceremonies.

Thus any argument over the principle of a Palestinian state lost all meaning long ago. Today the argument is over borders, settlements, Jerusalem, and the refugees' right to return.

A party that has nothing to say on these issues, but instead prides itself on its leap from the distant past to the not-quite-so-distant past, deserves nothing but ridicule.

What's the difference between Likud and Labour? The Likud persists in subscribing to the "flat earth" theory. Labour "does not negate the possibility" that the earth is round. Big deal.

Turkey's struggle between old and new not helped by Europe

By William Pfaff

ISTANBUL — Turkish intellectuals persistently suggest that their country's future is "either Iran or Algeria." If this bleak prediction is true, it means an end to the nearly century-long effort to remake the most important of modern Islamic societies on modern terms and reconcile it with the West.

Turkey's political and business establishment as well as its intellectuals are entirely Westernised in manner and style. But a century ago their predecessors were members of an oriental court and ruling apparatus, closer to China's than to the European courts that were its contemporaries.

A liberal constitution was imposed upon the Ottoman Empire only in 1908, by the "Young Turk" modernisers. After Turkey's defeat as a German ally in World War I, and the loss of what remained of its European empire, Ataturk — Mustafa Kemal — the maker of modern Turkey, abolished

the sultanate in 1922, and in 1924 disestablished Islam as state religion.

His subsequent social and educational reforms transformed Turkey, but precariously so. Turkey's very grave current problems originate in the continuing tension between modernisation and tradition, particularly traditional religion.

The political society of Turkey has been extensively but imperfectly Westernised. The modern party system has shallow roots and tends to produce governments closely, and sometimes corruptly, linked to the major commercial and banking groups of the nation, cut off from the peasantry of what remains a poor if rapidly and erratically developing country.

Today's Turkish government is further distracted by Kurdish nationalism and the more radical Kurds' separatist movement and terrorism.

The most important problem today, however, is the electoral power of Islamic fundamentalism. The

Islamist party, the Refah or Welfare Party, is paradoxically the only modern political organisation in Turkey. It has deep roots in countryside and village, offering a programme of religious-political reform to a population disoriented by the forces of modernisation.

The fundamentalists are strong enough to have assumed the prime ministry a year ago, expeditiously supported by the secular party led by the former prime minister, Tansu Ciller, well-known in the West. But this coalition acts under the edgy surveillance of the Turkish army, which has always considered itself custodian of Ataturk's vision of a secular and Westernised Turkey.

The army in 1980 dismissed a civilian government. It recently has stated its own "strategic concept" of a Turkey threatened by Islamic radicalism as well as by terrorism (a reference to the Kurdish separatists) and the foreign powers supporting Kurds and fundamentalism, Iran and Syria.

On May 14, the army reiterated that naval manoeuvres with Israel would take place despite the prime minister's attempt to annul them.

The balance is delicate among fundamentalists, led by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the secular opposition parties and the army. The press is under pressure. The government is held at least indirectly responsible for a recent raid on a television station, closure of a newspaper and interrogation of critical journalists.

Thus far the press has not been intimidated, in part because the two major press groups are political forces in their own right, with important television and banking interests. Publishers as well as journalists are volubly hostile to the government and have sought the support of the foreign press against attempts to suppress critical journalism.

The fundamentalist-led government and its programmes for Islamisation of education and public life are a new obstacle to Turkey's

ambition to become a part of the European Union. Turkey's EU membership has been explicitly opposed by Europe's Christian Democratic parties, and implicitly by other EU groups as well.

Membership was promised Turkey in 1963, and since January 1996 Turkey has had a customs union with the EU, and of course is a NATO member. The secular and Europeanised part of Turkey's leadership expresses something like despair at the lack of comprehension and support they find in Europe.

Not many Europeans are open to the plea made earlier this year by Jacques Attali, a onetime French government official and first president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, that Turkey deserves to be welcomed into the EU precisely in order to demonstrate to the rest of the Islamic World that democratic and secular politics will be rewarded by

membership in the ruling international institutions.

Should fundamentalism provoke the military to take power again, Turkey's relations with the EU will be harmed, the country's isolation worsened. Its U.S.-backed military cooperation agreement with Israel contributes to its present pariah status in the eyes of orthodox Islamic governments and its own fundamentalist voters.

The way ahead for the Turks is extremely difficult. In principle Turkey has a leading geopolitical role to play in relation to the Turkish-speaking states of the former Soviet Union, and a good deal has been done to develop Turkish relations with those countries. But the ambition of Ataturk, and of the generation that remade the country, was to reestablish Turkey as a European power — and that is what an inward-looking Europe today resists.

Amman forum to tackle the issues of leadership and intuition

By Adel Safty

ON JUNE 1, 1997, the first international leadership programme in the world will attempt to address the question of "What is leadership" in Amman. The forum is organised by the first branch of the United Nations University in the Middle East. The United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, UNESCO, the World Bank and leaders from around the world will spend a month, at different times, tackling the question of leadership.

In preparation for this unique event, Secretary Harlan Cleveland, who is in a unique position to know a thing or two about leadership, was asked the question: "Is there such a thing as a leadership instinct?"

Secretary Cleveland graduated from Princeton University in 1938 and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. After World War II he served as a United Nations relief and rehabili-

tation administrator in Italy and in China. He was a supervisor of the last stages of the Marshall Plan for European Recovery. In 1961, he became assistant-secretary of state in the Kennedy administration. He became U.S. NATO ambassador during the Johnson and Nixon administrations. After a distinguished academic career, he became, in 1991, president of the World Academy of Art and Science. He is author of hundreds of articles and eleven books, mostly on leadership. He is also the recipient of 22 honorary degrees.

Secretary Cleveland answered my question by giving examples: U.S. President Harry Truman, he said, was to be admired because he was a down to earth person who trusted his instincts. "When General MacArthur did not like Truman's injunction not to go up to the Yellow River (during the Korean War) he wrote a letter of rebellion to the Congress. Upon seeing the letter, Truman said: 'The son of a bitch can say that to Harry Truman, but not to the president of the United States.'"

The ability to make this distinction, said Secretary Cleveland, is an example of leadership instinct. President Nixon, he added, never learnt to make that all important distinction between the man and the office. That precipitated his downfall.

Mr. Cleveland also thought that President Kennedy possessed leadership instincts. He cited the example of the failed Bay of Pigs episode. In April 1961, Secretary Cleveland was briefed by the CIA (lies and fabrications, he said) and ordered to tell the U.S. man at the U.N., Adlai Stevenson, to defend the U.S. against charges that the U.S. was preparing to invade Cuba. Secretary Cleveland recalled that The New York Times knew the true story of the CIA involvement but refused to print the truth which finally came out with the disastrous failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Kennedy recovered from that fiasco, Mr. Cleveland said, because he quickly accepted responsibility and admitted his mistake.

When the truth became public, Kennedy said: "It was my fault. Let's admit it and go on from here." This, again, is an example of leadership instinct.

The lesson is clear, said Mr. Cleveland: "Assume responsibilities for your action. This is what we elect people for, not for the complicated analysis stuff. This can be done by the staff."

Secretary Cleveland attended the Kennedy crisis cabinet meetings which dealt with the Cuban missile crisis. He said that when the stakes are high, the leadership's challenge is to find a way out without appearing to have blinked. This President Kennedy did, by answering Khrushchev's first soft letter and ignoring his second harsh letter as if it had not arrived. This was leadership instinct.

The lesson here, Mr. Cleveland said, is that you must decide in advance how far you are prepared to go before embarking in any negotiation. In other words, "plan your strategies in advance and seize the moment".

The higher the position of leadership the more intuition one has to use, said Secretary Cleveland.

should be the arsenal of democracy," Roosevelt's acceptance of this advice was just as fast, and just as intuitive. "From now on, Jack, that phrase is mine, not yours".

To develop leadership instincts, Mr. Cleveland reiterated, one should accept the responsibility of one's actions; make a distinction between one's person and one's role; decide how far one is prepared to go before any negotiation and dare to think intuitively.

The audience at the leadership forum includes individuals in positions of leadership from about 56 countries, selected from over 650 applicants from around the world: high-level government officials, diplomats, doctors, lawyers, environmentalists, university professors, directors of international programmes, women activists, and United Nations officials.

Prof. Adel Safty heads of the first branch of the United Nations University in the Middle East. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Mr. Cleveland also told a story about the benefits of freeing the imaginative subconscious: "John McCloy dozed off during a meeting where President Franklin Roosevelt was trying to decide (while the United States was still neutral in World War II) how much to help the European allies, and how to present this 'foreign aid' to a still sceptical U.S. public. The president, abruptly awakened his sleeping subordinate with a question: 'Well, Jack, what do you think we ought to do?' McCloy opened one eye. 'Mr. President, I think we

place to assert Israeli control over all Jerusalem. The proposal would be submitted to Israel during the next shuttle mission by U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross, the radio said. The Har Homa groundbreaking in mid-March sparked several weeks of Palestinian stone throwing protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. An Israeli planning commission Friday approved plans for 3,400 apartments at Sur Baher, an Arab neighbourhood of Jerusalem adjoining Abu Ghneim.

Randa Habib's corner

Rating, in relative terms

IT TOOK me time to realise it, but now I know that the key word in this life is "relativity". Everything you have, everything you see, or even who you are, is relative to your surroundings.

Among the blind, the one-eyed is naturally a king. A big apartment in Tokyo would appear tiny in Amman, where houses are huge.

Beauty is relative to the environment. So are intelligence, skill, performance.

Nudity is also relative, and is seen so differently from Cannes to Tehran, for example.

The list is endless. But relativity is not necessarily the result of a comparison between cultures in different countries. It is a daily judgement from personal experience.

When change occurs, we consider it good or bad, comparing it with the former situation.

The other day, a friend of mine was full of praise for one of our public figures.

- He is great, he said.
- Why? I asked.
- First of all, he is always smiling.
- I agree, this is a rare quality around here.
- He is presentable.
- What else?
- He comes from a very good family. His father was also a public figure.
- What else?
- He attends the funerals of all the relatives of his acquaintances, and the weddings too.
- What else?
- His English is good, and he can differentiate the "p" and the "b".
- But, how is he managing the department he heads?
- I can't say, but I am sure of one thing: he is definitely better than his predecessor.
- What is he doing that his predecessor did not do?
- He is answering my calls.

Government not swayed

(Continued from page 1)

said a JPA council member. "He said that one of the reasons for the introduction of the law was that the government does not want the tabloids to affect the way the elections are held, to influence voters, to blackmail candidates or to tarnish their image."

The council member told the Jordan Times that the JPA is now seeking a tacit commitment from the government that the law be "frozen" or not actively implemented against journalists.

"We also discussed the possibility that, following the discussions of the joint committee, the

government may submit another amended (press) law to the next Parliament," he said.

Journalists are seeking the annulment of the law. However, attempts to sway the government's position thus far have been futile.

The only existing option to have the law revoked is to convene an extraordinary session of Parliament, which requires an absolute majority of signatures from the 80-member Lower House. Opposition deputies last week began collecting signatures calling for an extraordinary session, but on Sunday they described the number of signatures collected as "modest."

Juppe throws in towel

(Continued from page 1)

said his supporters should vote for the left in the second round rather than the traditional right.

Mr. Chirac's risky gamble in calling an early poll backfired Sunday when the left-wing opposition alliance gained a surprise lead of nearly six points over the ruling centre-right in the first round of the two-stage vote.

The conservative daily Le Figaro said Sunday's vote showed the people of France

desired neither the left nor the right, but that the verdict was "a much stronger rejection of the right than of the left."

The newspaper, which usually supports the government, said the right could only win "by changing tone, personalities and language. It cannot allow itself to be boxed into the image of the outgoing government. It must offer dreams, a future and prospects."

On Sunday the socialist-led opposition confounded opinion polls which had all failed

to predict the left's surge.

Taking a gamble, Mr. Chirac called the election 10 months ahead of schedule to secure a conservative majority in parliament until the end of his own presidential mandate in 2002. He said the snap vote would enable the government to push through reforms needed to meet key European deadlines for monetary union.

There were only a dozen outright winners of seats among the more than 6,000 candidates running in the first round for the national assembly, and most top personalities of the right were forced into run-offs.

Egypt wins wide support

(Continued from page 1)

Jerusalem between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Mubarak's envoy Osama Baz, the television said.

However, a senior aide to Mr. Netanyahu who was present at the meeting denied the report Saturday.

"Israel did not offer suspension of construction at Har Homa," said cabinet secretary Danny Naveh. "The building at Har Homa will continue."

However, Israel does

have some new ideas about building for Arabs in Jerusalem, Mr. Naveh said. Channel 1 said the United States, the European countries and Jordan all support Mr. Mubarak's offer.

Israel Radio reported that the American State Department is also drawing up a proposal under which there would be a "technical suspension" of the Har Homa project — apparently a face-saving device for Mr. Netanyahu, who ordered the construction in the first

place to assert Israeli control over all Jerusalem.

The proposal would be submitted to Israel during the next shuttle mission by U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross, the radio said.

The Har Homa groundbreaking in mid-March sparked several weeks of Palestinian stone throwing protests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

An Israeli planning commission Friday approved plans for 3,400 apartments at Sur Baher, an Arab neighbourhood of Jerusalem adjoining Abu Ghneim.



The A8's solar panelled sunroof uses the sun's energy to automatically power the air-conditioning whilst the engine is off. Thus, guaranteeing a constant flow of air. Combined with insulating-glass windows (that reduce heat penetration by 30% and UV radiation by 99%), the temperature of the A8's interior is reduced by as much as 20°C. So you see even the sunroof has been re-defined in the A8. The 3.7 and 4.2 Audi A8 from Germany.

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World Bank expected to provide \$32 million loan for tourism project

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is launching a \$44 million project to "create the conditions for an increase in sustainable and environmentally sound tourism" in Petra, Wadi Rum, Jerash and Karak, a source at the ministry announced Monday.

The project, which will also focus on "realising tourism-related employment and income-generation potential" at the sites, should be mostly financed by the World Bank.

According to project manager Hala Latouf, negotiations between the Ministry of Planning and the international body have already reached the final stages, and a \$32 million loan for the implementation of the project should be announced "in a month."

The new tourism development project is expected to help the Kingdom's tourism industry overcome the current hardships, largely due to the region's instability and the deadlock in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

According to Ministry of Tourism statistics, the number of visitors to Jordan's most famous archaeological sites, Petra and Jerash, has registered a considerable drop of 17 and 15 per cent respectively in the first four months of 1997, compared with the same period last year.

The mosaic city of Madaba has suffered even more, with a drop of 26.5 per cent in the number of tourists during the first four months of 1997 compared to the

same period in 1996, (56,123 this year, and 76,335 last year).

Businesspersons largely fault the decline on the hardline policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and say that the negative image of the Mideast region abroad has had a deleterious impact especially on the European and the U.S. markets.

Ministry of Tourism statistics confirm that the number of tourists from American and European countries dropped by 12.2 and 9.3 respectively in the first four months of 1997, compared to the same period in 1996.

The new tourism development project includes four components: Petra Region Infrastructure Development and Environmental Management; Wadi Rum Infrastructure Development and Environmental Conservation; Karak and Jerash Tourism Development Pilot Programme; and, finally, Sector Development Support.

In Petra, the project envisages the construction of two new access roads and the development of solid waste management, as well as environmental measures, such as reforestation and urban landscaping, and improvements to visitor support services, (mainly development of proper signalling and interpretation, adhoc trails and parks, various adjustments to the visitor centre and the site entrance area).

Petra will absorb 62.1 of the project's total cost (\$27.4 million).

As for Wadi Rum, the project will concentrate on infrastructure development,

improved protected area management and visitor-management services, and income-generating activities for the local community, particularly Bedouin women.

Together with a new road, and visitor and administration facilities, the ministry will establish a "Women's Handicraft Centre" for the Wadi Rum community, in the wake of similar successful experiments which have already been realised by other organisations in other parts of the Kingdom, like Jebel Bani Hamida and Dana.

The project's component dedicated to Wadi Rum is scheduled to cost \$9.2 million, while the "Karak and Jerash Tourism Development Pilot Project" component, mainly consisting of feasibility studies for tourism facilities in the two sites, has an estimated cost of \$5.2 million.

The \$2.2 million final component of the project will "provide the ministry of tourism with one long-term and four short-term experts to help fine-tune the government's tourism development programme," the official text of the project description says.

The experts would help a joint private-public sector team prepare a long-term tourism development strategy and an attached prioritised investment programme, a legislative and regulatory study to identify impediments to increased tourist flows and propose measures to deregulate the sector, as well as a restructuring plan for tourism public institutions.

Bank of Israel seen cutting rates

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli interest rates could fall as much as 0.5 percentage point for June, analysts have said, but they warned that a cautious central bank might still hold the line another month or two.

Bank of Israel last cut the base rate at the end of February to 13.9 per cent.

"All the parameters say it must cut," said Adam Reuter, managing director of Financial Immunites, a financial consulting firm.

He said he expected the base rate would be lowered 0.2-0.3 point but warned there might be no cut at all.

The central bank governor has a reputation as a monetary hawk, prompting attacks from the treasury and business leaders who say he has ignored a slowing economy and the upward pressure interest rates have exerted on the Israeli currency. But analysts said they expected the governor would begin moderating his stance in the face of the slowdown, which began in the second half of last year.

"The big picture is that the trend is toward lower interest rates over the next few months," said Hezi Gutman, chief economist at First International Bank of Israel. "Whether it will begin this month I can't say for certain."

The Central Bureau of Statistics last week reported gross domestic product grew at a 2.8 per cent annualised rate in the first quarter. That was lower than the 4.4 per cent increase for full-year 1996 but up from a 1.8 per cent rate in the previous quarter.

"The data for January-March show there is still no recession," Mr. Gutman said. "We're less certain now than we were before last week that the economy is continuing to slow."

REUTERS • REUTERS • The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP
US Dollar		1.0000	1.8822	0.6068	1.3955	116.40	1.3768	1695.73	1.6950
DE Mark		0.5200	1.0000	0.3366	0.8288	68.50	0.8146	966.88	1.5242
GB Sterling		1.6400	2.7700	1.0000	2.2961	188.55	2.2575	2730.86	3.1130
CH Franc		0.7145	1.2035	0.4333	1.0000	83.17	0.3632	1188.23	1.2580
JP Yen		0.0084	0.0156	0.0033	0.0077	1.0000	0.0084	121.79	1.3400
CA Dollar		0.7265	1.3313	0.4447	1.0214	71.18	0.7265	876.80	1.0000
IT Lira		0.0006	0.0011	0.0003	0.0007	1433.08	0.0006	1.0000	1.3423
NL Guilder		0.0026	0.0048	0.0016	0.0037	36.36	0.0026	320.36	1.0000
FR Franc		0.1753	0.3290	0.1068	0.2458	20.36	0.1753	213.36	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP
US Dollar		1.0000	1.8822	0.6068	1.3955	116.40	1.3768	1695.73	1.6950
Jordan Dinar		1.4124	2.6772	0.9328	2.1412	182.63	2.1176	2571.81	2.7874
GB Sterling		0.2866	0.5388	0.1005	0.2377	20.36	0.2866	348.96	0.3958
Bahrain Dinar		2.46	4.6388	1.6667	3.9508	338.40	4.6388	5618.88	6.3911
Qatar Dinar		0.2747	0.5184	0.1003	0.2353	20.16	0.2747	335.64	0.3912
Kuwait Dinar		3.3125	6.2388	2.2222	5.1412	438.40	6.2388	7648.88	8.8122
Emirate Dinar		0.2723	0.5128	0.1021	0.2361	20.22	0.2723	334.88	0.3922
Lebanese L1000		0.0008	0.0015	0.0005	0.0011	0.09	0.0008	0.0096	0.0122
Egyptian		0.2350	0.4458	0.1088	0.2478	21.00	0.2350	288.00	0.3200

Energy		Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL
Brent	20.50	20.50							
WTI	21.20	21.20							
Bonny	20.50	20.50							
Libya	19.10	19.10							
UL Gas	20.00	20.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP
SA Riyal		0.2666	0.5058	0.1628	0.3729	31.0011	0.2666	320.36	0.3958
AE Dirham		0.2723	0.5128	0.1021	0.2361	20.22	0.2723	334.88	0.3922
KW Dinar		3.3125	6.2388	2.2222	5.1412	438.40	6.2388	7648.88	8.8122
BH Dinar		0.2723	0.5128	0.1021	0.2361	20.22	0.2723	334.88	0.3922
CY Pound		1.9704	3.7434	1.2662	2.77	230.361			

Metal Prices		Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL
Gold (oz)	342.75	342.75							
Silver (oz)	4.75	4.75							
Platinum (oz)	389.25	389.25							
AL (3 Months)	1637	1641							
CU (3 Months)	2815	2820							
ZINC (3 Months)	1380	1384							
Lead (3 Months)	631	635							
Ni (3 Months)	7530	7550							

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP
USD		1.00	1.88	0.61	1.40	116.40	1.38	1695.73	1.69
DEM		0.52	1.00	0.34	0.83	68.50	0.81	966.88	1.52
GBP		1.64	2.77	1.00	2.30	188.55	2.26	2730.86	3.11
CHF		0.71	1.20	0.43	1.00	83.17	0.36	1188.23	1.26
JPY		0.0084	0.0156	0.0033	0.0077	1.00	0.0084	121.79	1.34
FRF		0.1753	0.3290	0.1068	0.2458	20.36	0.1753	213.36	1.00
ITL		0.0006	0.0011	0.0003	0.0007	1433.08	0.0006	1.00	1.34
ESP		0.0026	0.0048	0.0016	0.0037	36.36	0.0026	320.36	1.00

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value
New York	DOW JONES	7345.91	87.78	1.21	7362.8	7259.78	7258.13		
New York	S&P 500	647.35	11.37	1.36	648.49	635.58	635.06		
London	FT-SE 100	4661.8	10	0.21	4672.7	4652.1	4651.8		
Tokyo	Nikkei 225	20443.5	24.5	0.17	20453.5	19968.5	19968.5		
Paris	CAC 40	2854.74	-108.16	-3.91	2865.89	2845.84	2845.84		
Frankfurt	DAX	3367.88	65.87	1.95	3381.91	3351.1	3351.1		

Energy		Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL
Coffee (c/b)	277.08	Spot							
Cocoa (c/b)	3478	Spot							
Sugar (c/b)	326.5	Spot							
Wheat (c/b)	155.5	Spot							
Soya (c/b)	21.07	Spot							
Ten (c/b)	155	Spot							
Barley (c/b)	0	Spot							
Rice (c/b)	400	Spot							

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Unit	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP
US Dollar		1.00	1.88	0.61	1.40	116.40	1.38	1695.73	1.69
GB Sterling		1.64	2.77	1.00	2.30	188.55	2.26	2730.86	3.11
DE Mark		0.52	1.00	0.34	0.83	68.50	0.81	966.88	1.52
CH Franc		0.71	1.20	0.43	1.00	83.17	0.36	1188.23	1.26
JP Yen		0.0084	0.0156	0.0033	0.0077	1.00	0.0084	121.79	1.34
FR Franc		0.1753	0.3290	0.1068	0.2458	20.36	0.1753	213.36	1.00
IT Lira		0.0006	0.0011	0.0003	0.0007	1433.08	0.0006	1.00	1.34
ESP		0.0026	0.0048	0.0016	0.0037	36.36	0.0026	320.36	1.00

Oman sees sharp rise in foreign investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman expects foreign investment to jump in the next few years following the introduction of more incentives within overall economic reforms, an official has said in press remarks.

Mahmoud Al Jarwani, executive president of the Muscat Securities Market (MSM), said foreign investment in shares had reached 14 per cent since Oman opened up the market to expatriates three years ago.

"The current level of foreign investment in the stock

market is optimistic and reasonable. We expect it to easily increase to 25 per cent in the year 2000," he told the United Arab Emirates newspaper Al Khaleej.

Oman approved a law in 1994 allowing citizens from other Gulf states to trade in its shares. It later extended the rule to other foreigners who are permitted to have an ownership of up to 49 per cent.

The measure was part of economic reforms launched by Oman in early 1990s to activate its economy and

cushion the impact of volatile oil prices.

The reforms, the widest in the region, include privatisations, more incentives to local and foreign investors, and better taxation laws.

But several national companies have refused to give access to foreign investors, prompting the government to announce a new set of incentives.

Mr. Jarwani said the new laws, introduced in early 1997, were intended to remove what he called obstacles created by those firms

against foreign investors.

"Fresh incentives were also introduced a few days ago," he said. "They will benefit the companies in which foreign investment reaches 49 per cent."

Mr. Jarwani said Oman had also broken long-standing policies in the oil-rich Gulf by allowing foreigners to have 100 per cent ownership of some projects.

He said such projects must contribute effectively to domestic economic development, utilise local resources and create jobs for Omanis.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Inscrutable talk
- 5 Chums
- 9 Desert
- 13 Fiber plant
- 14 Stages
- 16 West of Nod
- 17 Tabula —
- 18 Wise guy
- 20 Secret rendezvous
- 22 Iranian coin
- 23 Firmament
- 24 Voyeur
- 28 Vintage
- 30 On the — (precisely)
- 33 Bard's above
- 34 Trove
- 37 Sea eagles
- 39 Quercine plants
- 41 Clinches
- 43 Pianist or fiddler
- 44 Celery
- 46 Oxford
- 48 Trouble
- 49 Corner
- 50 Corrupt
- 52 Eastwood role
- 56 Snake
- 59 Comida
- 60 performer
- 63 Recorded
- 67 Parisian head
- 68 Thought
- 69 Pastry chef
- 70 Amerind
- 71 Junction line
- 72 Invasion craft
- 73 Cleave

DOWN

- 1 Dray
- 2 Winglike
- 3 Busybody
- 4 Tantalizes
- 5 Postscript: abbr.
- 6 Banking device
- 7 Understand
- 8 Small shoot
- 9 Thicken
- 10 Lyric poems
- 11 At one's — and call
- 12 Pet octopus name?
- 15 ERA for one
- 19 By oneself
- 21 Tracy's love
- 25 Stones
- 26 Computer pictures
- 27 Dawn
- 28 Cote sounds
- 29 Jumped
- 31 Rotgut
- 32 Strangs
- 35 College cheer
- 36 Era
- 38 Convinced
- 40 Hank
- 42 Blood fluids
- 45 Spirit
- 47 Arrange
- 51 Demosthenes or Cicero
- 53 LBJ's son-in-law
- 54 Ordeal
- 55 Egg parts
- 56 Sale words
- 57 Team
- 58 Entreaty
- 61 Short jacket
- 62 Act
- 64 Take it on the
- 65 Allow
- 66 Dozens of mos.

Tuesday's Puzzle solved:

S	L	O	O	D	E	G	A	D	R	E	A	M
A	I	S	L	E	R	O	D	E	E	S	E	
B	R	A	D	S	A	G	U	A				
R	W	I	G									
O	G	E	E									
E	R	N	E	S	T							
A	L	S										
R	D											
P												
A	N	N										
A	N	I	N	G								
D	L	G	L	O	R							
D	E											
E	R											
R	S											

Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**** THE AGRICULTURAL Credit Corporation (ACC) has allocated JD20 million to extend loans to small farmers in 1997 to encourage them to invest in their lands and enable them to finance their agricultural projects in accordance with development priorities.**

ACC Director General Nimer Nabulsi told Al Ra'i that the corporation will focus in its lending policy on the small farmers and on "introducing lending programmes directed to low income groups and the unemployed in Jordan's rural and badia regions.

Mr. Nabulsi explained that the loans will benefit those farmers who seek to utilise their lands in irrigated and arid areas, to develop water resources for farming purposes, to develop animal wealth and poultry farming and agricultural manufacturing and mechanisation.

In addition, Mr. Nabulsi said, the loans will be extended to finance purchases of agricultural inputs and contracting rural farm buildings.

The ACC chief spoke about the corporation's achievements during 1996 by pointing out that a total of 8,272 credits were extended for a total of JD21.1 million. He said that the operations generated a JD1.69 million profit, noting that the outstanding loans at the end of last year stood at JD84.86 million. Included in the amount mentioned is a JD2 million loan that the ACC extended to the National Food (Shafa) processing company.

The corporation extended 7,252 loans in 1995 for a total of JD19.3 million. The outstanding amount at the end of 1995 was JD77.08 million.

Mr. Nabulsi noted that the increase in credit extension in 1996 was due to higher demand and to the "horizontal expansion" of the ACC operations which were widened to 20 branches throughout the Kingdom.

He highlighted the specialised lending programmes such as the diversification of income resources and the increase in food production which are being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture. Other programmes include the employed, which is being financed by the Employment and Development Fund, and the northern Ghor farmers' project which aims at improving irrigation techniques. A special project covers those who raise cattle as the ACC finances their purchases of fodder.

According to the director general, the ACC was able to collect JD18.24 million of the loans that fell due in 1996. The amount was JD3 million more the amount collected in 1995. Noting that the percentage of collection was 74 per cent, Mr. Nabulsi described the rate as being the highest achieved by the corporation since it was established.

The ACC's total assets at the end of last year amounted to JD92.74 million compared to JD85.83 at the end of 1995 (Al Ra'i).

AMMAN (Petra) — The government Monday urged pharmaceutical industries in Jordan to adapt to new requirements and standards that will be demanded by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) after the Kingdom is accepted as a WTO member.

member.
 mohammad Halaigah, the secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said Jordan's industries including the pharmaceutical industry will be affected by entry into the WTO. They will be required to adapt to the requirements provided under the Jordan-WTO agreement particularly in the area of intellectual property rights.

Dr. Halaigah was addressing the opening session of a three-day workshop organized by Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres (JEDCO) together with the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other institutions.

He said the current inter-

national economic developments and the trend towards the so-called globalisation of the economy present Jordan's industrial sector with major challenges.

Noting that the Jordanian pharmaceutical firms have in the past years achieved major successes by entering numerous markets, Dr. Halaiqa said that Jordan's drugs have acquired recognition in Arab and foreign nations.

But he warned that this industry will be facing strong competition in the world markets, and it will be necessary for it to adapt to the WTO requirements in order to guarantee further successes.

Dr. Golden Johnson from the U.S. FDA said: "If we went back to just a few years ago what we would think of is of each individual country perhaps having a pharmaceutical industry. It is now becoming a worldwide effort, and the more we share information between countries, the easier it is going to be in the market place."

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's 10 commercial banks have said they wrote off \$26.5 billion in bad debt in the year to March, about half the amount they pledged a year before, as they raced to clean up their books ahead of sweeping deregulation in financial sector.

After the bad debt haemorrhage that sent most of the 10 city banks deep in the red a year ago, most were looking better in the year to March.

They posted combined consolidated net profits of 48.2 billion yen (\$389 million), after suffering record combined consolidated losses of 774.9 billion yen (\$6.3 billion) the previous year.

The banks wrote off at the parent level a combined 3,290.1 billion yen in bad debt during the year, 48 per cent less than disposed of the previous year.

That still leaves them with 11,830.3 billion yen (\$95.4 billion) in bad and doubtful debt.

The pace remains accelerated as the banks now appear to be in a race among themselves to rid themselves of non-performing assets ahead of the 'big bang' deregulation underway, said ING Barings securities analyst James Firrillo.

Hardest hit was debt write-off laggard Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank Ltd., which suffered a consolidated pre-tax loss of 313.1 billion yen versus a profit of 174.3 billion yen previously, as it increased bad debt write-offs 12 per cent to 620.1 billion yen

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSE BANK CODE NO. - 000181
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY **26/05/1997**

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	SECOR'S NAME	F / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED '000	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
269.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.87	12	840	216990	256.00	258.00	1.00
1.200	1.040	JOR. ELECTRIC BK.	7	0.00	28	31640	17547	1.80	1.87	0.07
5.500	4.100	CALSO ARAB BANK	10.3	3.00	1	5600	28000	5.00	5.00	-
1.210	1.000	KID. EAST INV. BK.	70.3	0.00	4	2750	2893	1.04	1.07	0.03
2.480	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	7	1.76	1	5000	3772	2.18	2.18	-
5.100	4.250	THE MORGAN BK.	14.6	3.96	17	3743	18075	4.77	4.90	0.13
2.950	2.480	JOR. HAWAT BANK	19.0	0.00	7	9563	3.55	2.62	2.62	-
4.050	3.480	JOR. LIZANAT BANK	14.7	3.31	8	946	3424	3.62	3.62	-
2.850	1.000	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITWA)	7	13.27	2	300	337	1.08	1.13	0.05
BANK SECTOR TOTALS	INDEX: 193.41	%CHG: +0.14		78	49884	135951				
2.400	1.620	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	4.6	12.35	4	1300	2100	1.62	1.63	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS	INDEX: 113.59	%CHG: 0.00		5	1330	2222				
1.820	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC FWR.	8.1	5.99	18	9933	15934	1.68	1.67	-0.02
2.650	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	13.5	5.63	3	370	393	2.21	2.31	0.10
1.400	1.000	PORTFOLIO	7	0.00	38	72250	8349	1.14	1.20	0.06
9.300	6.300	ALURA I	12.4	7.25	6	2187	14989	7.00	6.90	-0.10
3.720	2.930	ALURA INTL. INV. FUND.	9.8	0.00	3	3270	6809	3.90	3.80	-0.10
1.230	0.960	KARSA EDUCATION	6.09	0.00	1	2000	3910	1.97	1.97	-
3.230	1.630	OFFSHORE CO.	7.9	6.59	3	300	3467	1.67	1.67	-
1.080	0.660	OFFSHORE LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	350	163	0.66	0.68	0.02
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS	INDEX: 110.32	%CHG: +0.35		110	89865	125461				
3.950	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	35.9	2.76	101	363815	147861	3.93	3.99	0.07
2.500	1.710	JOR. PROSPECTIVE MINES	9.7	2.86	15	67149	338626	3.50	3.50	-
4.430	4.950	AL-JAWHAR	10.1	0.00	38	122000	6.43	5.58	5.58	-
10.400	8.730	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.55	10	15955	14818	9.28	9.30	0.02
1.470	1.120	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	9.0	8.85	6	10980	11115	1.11	1.17	0.06
1.260	0.560	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGRI.	0.650	0.00	1	2750	3758	0.56	0.56	-
3.970	3.040	AL-JAWHAR, MUMF.	10.2	5.40	303	11101	3.68	2.70	2.70	-
3.990	2.330	GENERAL. MCHNG.	9	0.00	1	100	321	3.33	3.21	-0.13
4.850	4.430	AL ALJAWHAR INV.	5.180	0.00	3	1829	333	4.43	4.43	-
4.770	3.130	AL ALJAWH. IND.	7.5	7.75	1	100	223	3.39	3.22	-0.17
0.960	0.50	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.6	0.00	11	7280	3625	0.50	0.50	-
1.170	0.700	JOR. SERVICES	10.0	0.00	9	320	399	0.70	0.61	-0.09
1.670	1.120	AL-JAWHAR, CHEM.	26.1	4.29	9	3760	3329	1.42	1.42	-
3.650	1.830	UTV. MOVM. INDS.	10.9	0.00	3	320	3424	1.83	1.83	-
1.130	0.680	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	8.7	8.77	11	4240	3098	1.13	1.14	0.01
1.610	1.300	MATL. CHEMISTRY	13.4	4.93	2	500	710	1.41	1.42	0.01
1.230	0.840	JUN. NEW CHABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	5	8240	3928	0.86	0.86	-
1.330	0.930	UNION CH. & VEG.	6.3	3.96	4	1448	1664	1.15	1.15	-
1.370	0.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	39.6	0.00	5	4000	3583	0.87	0.87	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS	INDEX: 124.29	%CHG: +1.17		352	504697	1932586				
GRAND TOTAL	INDEX: 156.73	%CHG: +0.57		449	645778	3396239				

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY	26/05/1997									
750	410	JOR. TRADE PNC.	12.8	0.00	42	66600	31491	4.46	4.48	0.02
840	660	UNION INV. 502	9	0.00	6	1987	312	6.67	6.67	-
810	730	ALJAWH. PTM. INVEST.	5	0.00	16	12030	5771	4.48	4.49	0.01
950	510	ALJAWH. 751	14.2	9.32	9	342	342	5.10	5.10	-
540	500	JOR. UNIV. MATCH-JEMCO	9	0.00	2	1600	570	3.44	3.44	-
1090	570	JOR. UNIV. METALS	8	0.00	3	364	150	5.77	5.77	-
530	510	ARAB BANK FUND	9	0.00	4	4930	2723	5.10	5.10	-
670	430	ALJAWH. INTL. INV. TRD.	51.8	0.00	3	767	338	4.44	4.48	0.04
800	400	MATL. MULL. ENG. HANICO	2	0.00	32	38750	21748	3.66	3.77	0.11
960	710	ALJAWH. 180	2	0.00	1	180	3114	7.10	7.10	-
590	430	ALJAWH. ELECT. INDS.	7	0.00	1	8000	2960	4.51	4.51	-
1260	860	ALJAWH. 752	10	0.00	10	1629	3482	8.67	8.67	-
760	550	PARIZ PARTNER. 852	2	0.00	4	1700	3700	5.50	5.50	-
610	390	UNIV. ENG.	35.9	0.00	3	1750	735	4.43	4.42	0.01
820	590	UNIV. SERVICE	0.00	0.00	13	57680	10871	6.93	6.86	0.03
1000	610	BEIT ALHATHIM. 754	9	0.00	7	2967	5768	6.07	6.07	-
870	530	KID. EAST COMPLEX	7.7	0.00	2	2750	1815	0.66	0.66	-
GRAND TOTAL				160	171953	80246				

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Heret Arnold and Milne Anglicker

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

THOLC

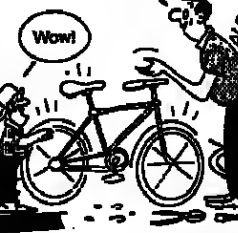
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COMINE

FLERBY

There you are, good as
new



A GOOD THING
TO DO WITH
BIKES IN A
JUNK YARD

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here :

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's


Answer:

Jumble: TESTY PIPER UNPAID FRENZY

Answer: What the manager gave his boxer -
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French Open Sampras, Seles win in 1st round

PARIS (Agencies) — So far, so good. Top-seeded Pete Sampras won his first-round match at the French Open Monday, taking a step toward winning the one Grand Slam title that eludes him.

Sampras defeated France's Fabrice Santoro in straight sets, 6-3, 7-5, 6-1. After a hard-fought second set, he dominated the final set, closing it out with a service break. He never lost serve.

In the day's other top matches, Yevgeny Kafelnikov began the defence of his title with a straight-set victory, and 16-year-old American Venus Williams began her Grand Slam career with a tough three-set win.

Kafelnikov defeated Martin Damm of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-4, 6-4, showing little effect of the broken finger he suffered with a blow to a punching bag in January.

It was the first match he had won at a Grand Slam tournament since his French Open victory last year.

"To be honest, I didn't feel I played well, but I played good enough to win," Kafelnikov said. "I felt a lot of pressure."

The unseeded Williams, the new great American hope in women's tennis, was playing her first match outside the United States. She defeated Japan's Naoko Sawamatsu 6-2, 6-7 (2-7), 7-5 in a match that lasted 2 hours 37 minutes.

To the third set, Williams was down a break at 3-1. She broke back for 3-2, then broke again at 5-4. She double-faulted twice while trying to serve out the match, allowing Sawamatsu to even it at 5-5.

Williams broke back at 6-5, and this time served out the match.

The crowd gave her a huge ovation as she walked off court.

Williams said later that when she faltered in the third set, "it was a nervous point. It shouldn't have happened."

But she added: "When it's time to do the job, I do my best to do it."

Four other American women scored first-round victories Monday. Fifth-seeded Lindsay Davenport defeated South African Joanne Kruger 6-2, 6-3. Unseeded Chanda Rubin beat Argentina's Marinana Diaz-Oliva 7-6 (7-5), 7-5. Amy Frazier and Nicole Arendt also won.

Spaniard Alex Corretja beat Morocco's Kalim Alami, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

Third-seeded and three-time champion Monica Seles eliminated Miho Saeki of Japan, 6-0, 6-3. Seles could face Williams in the third round.

In other first-round matchups, Austria's Thomas Muster, seeded fifth and slumping badly on clay this



Cedric Pioline of France hits a backhand during his match against Oliver Gross of Germany in the first round of the French Tennis Open at Roland Garros Stadium (Reuters photo)

season, faced Germany's Marc-Kevin Goellner.

— Carlos Moya, one of six seeded Spaniards, faced fellow Spaniard Alberto Martin.

Meanwhile, 16-year-old Martina Hingis was her usual laughing, confident self — despite the knee surgery she went through five weeks ago after falling off a horse.

The Swiss star asked for and got an extra day to practice; she plays her first-round match Tuesday, against Slovakia's Henrieta Nagyova.

Meanwhile, Britain's gloom at this year's French Open continued when Greg Rusedski crashed at the first hurdle in a five-set thriller to Magnus Norman of Sweden after battling back from two sets down.

The Canadian-born Briton, ranked 41 in the world, lost 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-9 to his 70th-ranked opponent in 3hrs 08mins on a sun-drenched outside court at Roland Garros.

Rusedski's opening day departure was another savage blow to British tennis, which was already reeling from defeats for all its qualifiers in the men's and women's singles over the weekend.

His exit leaves Tim Henman, the number 14

seed, as Britain's sole survivor at the tournament.

Henman, faces French wildcard entry Olivier Delatre in his first round match on Tuesday.

"I went into the match too tentatively," said the 23-year-old Rusedski, a finalist at Zagreb and San Jose this season and a second round loser here a year ago.

"If I'd started at the third set I would have done a lot better," the Crestfallen Briton said, admitting he "got a little upset at myself" on too many crucial points.

Although he slammed down 13 aces to Norman's four, 11 double faults and 74 unforced errors, twice as many as his opponent, eventually told their own story.

"I can't be too disappointed. It's only my second or third tournament back — oo my favourite surface of course," joked Rusedski, referring to his general dislike of clay, although he grew up oo it back in Canada.

The Briton, returning from a serious wrist injury, shrugged off his obvious disappointment at his own exit by wishing Tim Henman luck in his match with Delatre, forecasting that his compatriot would "probably win in four

(sets)."

Norman, now faces Indian number one Leander Paes, who earlier defeated South Africa's Stafford Grant, — a "welcome change from Australian Jason Stoltenberg who has beaten him in his last three tournaments."

Norman showed great tenacity to move into the driving seat after games had initially gone with serve in the opening set, breaking Rusedski in the eighth game when the Briton double-faulted.

The Swede wrapped up the set winning his serve to love.

Rusedski was blowing hot and cold, and, having won his service to love at the start of the second, he was broken to fall 1-2 behind. He never recovered from that, losing the set 6-2.

Having given himself a mountain to climb, Rusedski promptly set off towards the summit, taking the third set with comparative ease before levelling at two sets all.

In the fourth, games had gone with serve until Rusedski broke crucially for 5-4.

In the decider, all his hard work appeared to have gone to waste as Norman broke him for 2-0 and then held serve for 3-0. But Rusedski broke back, only to drop his service yet again to stand 1-4 down.

A brief fightback saw the Briton cut the deficit to 3-4 but a further loss of serve left him at 3-5.

Rusedski then dug deep into his reserves of stamina to break back and hold serve for 5-5. Games then went once more with serve until Norman secured his sixth, and final break, when Rusedski set a defensive backhand volley over the baseline following a weary Norman drive.

Jordan to host Women's Asian Handball Championship

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Handball Federation (JHF) Monday announced that Jordan will host the Asian Women's Handball Championship due to take place June 4-9 at Al Hussein Youth City's Sports Palace.

"We are proud to host this championship in which six top Asian teams will be taking part," JHF President Sari Hamdan told the Jordan Times.

He said that while Jordan's team will not participate in the event "fans and players will have the chance to watch the professionals in action."

On the sidelines of the event the Jordanian team will play several friendly matches against the competing teams to gain more experience for future events.

The six-team include Asian titleholders Korea in addition Japan, China, Taipei, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Only the top three teams will qualify for the World Championship due to be held later this year in Japan," Hamdan added.

The championship is sponsored by the Asian Handball Federation.

Matches will be televised on JTV and there will also be free admittance to the matches in a step to encourage more people to watch the game.

As the JSF tries to upgrade the game in the Kingdom, the women's national team has overcome a long-time obstacle.

"We were finally able to recruit a full-time Ukrainian coach who is trying hard to form a new team," Hamdan said.

With the aim of forming a strong new lineup, the Ukrainian coach started regrouping players from different parts of the Kingdom.

"The coach worked hard and chose 15 players from all over the country," he said.

"The national team has several good players who worked with the team and proved their dedication including Lima Jallad, Suzan Farid, Maha Awwad, Hannan Sabbagh and Faten Bakheet who have been with the team since ages and form the nucleus of the handball team," he concluded.

Graf worries more about fitness than ranking

PARIS (R) — For the first time in years Steffi Graf will not start the French Open as the top seed but the German, fighting her way back after a long injury break, says she has other things to worry about.

"I wish I could only worry about that," Graf, second to Swiss teenager Martina Hingis in the world rankings, told a news conference Sunday.

"My ranking is not even oo my mind. I have to concentrate on how I've been playing lately and on how I will be playing in the next few weeks."

Graf's fitness is one of the big question marks as the Paris tournament starts on Monday even though her confidence has been boosted by victory in Saturday's Strasbourg tournament final.

The German made her comeback in the German Open in Berlin the previous week after a three-month

lay-off with a knee injury hot her run ended in the quarter-finals when she was humbled out by Amanda Coetzer of South Africa.

"I'm slowly getting into the rhythm again but I certainly would have needed more time to be fully fit," she said.

"There are certain periods during which I play really well, then I have some lapses in between, which means my concentration is not there all the time."

"Another problem is that I need to strengthen my muscles. There's still quite a big difference in the way the muscles are defined between the right and the left leg."

Hingis is also coming back after a knee injury but hers was not quite as bad.

"I know she had to stop playing for a few weeks but she will still be a major threat," Graf, who has won the French Open five times, said.

Everybody will be looking for a final showdown between Graf and Hingis, who ousted her from the top of the rankings in March. But Graf said others could win.

"There's Arantxa (Sanchez-Vicario), who's always good here, and Mary Pierce, who has been playing very well lately," she said.

Graf said women's tennis was far more competitive nowadays than when she started her career.

"It was the reign of Chris (Evert) and Martina (Navratilova)," she said. "There was little room for other players. Now it's different."

"You see quite a few players with a chance of winning a tournament like this one. It's a change and it's a good thing for women's tennis, no question."

French Open singles champions

PARIS (R) — List of former singles champions at the French Open tennis which began Monday:

Men's Singles	Women's Singles
1973 Ilie Nastase	Margaret Court
1974 Bjorn Borg	Chris Evert
1975 Bjorn Borg	Chris Evert
1976 Adriano Panatta	Sue Barker
1977 Guillermo Vilas	Mima Jausovec
1978 Bjorn Borg	Virginia Ruzici
1979 Bjorn Borg	Chris Evert Lloyd
1980 Bjorn Borg	Chris Evert Lloyd
1981 Bjorn Borg	Hana Mandlikova
1982 Mats Wilander	Martina Navratilova
1983 Yannick Noah	Chris Evert Lloyd
1984 Ivan Lendl	Martina Navratilova
1985 Mats Wilander	Chris Evert Lloyd
1986 Ivan Lendl	Chris Evert Lloyd
1987 Ivan Lendl	Steffi Graf
1988 Mats Wilander	Arantxa Sanchez Vicario
1989 Michael Chang	Monica Seles
1990 Andre Gomez	Monica Seles
1991 Jim Courier	Steffi Graf
1992 Jim Courier	Arantxa Sanchez Vicario
1993 Sergi Bruguera	Steffi Graf
1994 Sergi Bruguera	Steffi Graf
1995 Thomas Muster	Steffi Graf
1996 Yevgeny Kafelnikov	Steffi Graf

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Houston Rockets' Hakeem Olajuwon finds his hand stuck in the net while attempting to grab a rebound between Utah Jazz players Jeff Hornacek (14) and Greg Foster in game four of the Western Conference finals in Houston (Reuters photo).

Indians edge Orioles with 9th inning strikeouts

CLEVELAND (R) — Ninth-inning, bases-loaded strikeouts of sluggers Eric Davis and Rafael Palmeiro by Mike Jackson and Alvin Morman preserved the Cleveland Indians' 7-6 victory over the Baltimore Orioles Sunday.

The Orioles had rallied for a pair of runs off Jackson in the top of the ninth to get within a run when Morman, a lefty, was summoned to get out Palmeiro, who bats left-handed.

On three pitches, Palmeiro swung and missed, fouled a ball off and struck out swinging to end the game.

The Indians are 7-1 in their last eight games.

In Kansas City, Chili Davis led off the bottom of the 11th with a homer off Bobby Ayala (3-2) to give the Royals a 4-3 victory over the Seattle Mariners.

Davis belted an 0-1 pitch out to right-center to make a winner of Jamie Walker (3-2), who worked a scoreless 11th.

Ken Griffey Jr. hit his Major League-leading 22nd homer, a solo shot in the first, to tie his own Major-League record for most home runs by the end of May, accomplished in 1994.

In Toronto, Benito Santiago drew a bases-loaded walk from rich Delucia with no outs in the 11th as the blue jays benefited from a fluke play and beat the Anaheim Angels 4-3.

In Chicago, Jeff Cirillo had a career-high four RBI and his two-run single in the fourth inning snapped a tie as the Milwaukee Brewers outslug the White Sox 11-7 in the rubber game of their three-game series.

In Detroit, Bob Higginson went 4-for-5, including his second career grand slam, and Felipe Lira (3-2) pitched five innings for his third straight win as the Detroit Tigers posted a 13-5 victory over the Texas Rangers.

At Minnesota, Rich Becker's single off Billy Taylor (1-3) with two outs in the bottom of the 10th scored pinch-runner Matt Lawton with the winning run as the Twins beat the Oakland Athletics 7-6.

In New York, the game between the Boston Red Sox and Yankees was postponed due to rain. No new date was announced.

Jordan about to give up right to host Asian basketball qualifiers

By Aleen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In a move that came as a surprise to most fans and players, Jordan is about to give up its bid to host the Asian Basketball Championship qualifiers in favour of Iran and the Ministry of Youth will soon have the final say.

While the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) accepted their bid last year, the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) was going ahead with plans to host the four-team competition in Amman. However, the latest reports confirm that the JBF has been in contact with its Iranian counterpart and are in favour of conceding the bid to Tehran.

"We are awaiting the ministry's decision but we would rather play the qualifiers in Tehran as it would be financially more rewarding," JBF Secretary Mohammad Nahil Hassan told the Jordan Times.

He explained that the JBF was not optimistic about its chances of covering the expenses of accommodating the teams which would run up to JD 15,000. Iran on the other hand, will be covering the teams' travel expenses as well.

Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Iran will be contesting the Aug. 9-14 West Asia pre-qualifiers. The top two teams will advance to the Asian Championship due to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Sept. 11-19.

Sixteen teams will be playing in Riyadh. The top five from the last championship and the hosts qualify automatically and there will be two teams from each of the ABC's five regional zones.

ABC vice-chairman and former JBF head Awwad Haddad Monday said he was surprised at the JBF's decision adding that he had not received any official notification of

Jordan's withdrawal of its bid.

"It's a pity to lose the advantage of playing at home. Our team definitely stands a better chance of qualifying playing in their own country. I am surprised at their sudden decision because sponsorship deals would have come through and covered the expenses," Haddad noted.

Haddad added that the West Asia zone also includes Palestine, Yemen and Lebanon but the three have not paid their dues to the ABC and will therefore not compete.

Earlier this year, the JBF suddenly declined participation in the 17th Women's Championship in Bangkok, Thailand although the team had been regrouped for four months in preparation for the event.

Jordan became the only Arab country to participate in the 16th championship in Japan in 1995.

The JBF is now preparing its teams for the Pan-Arab Games July 13-27. The women's team has been training for the past month and the men's team has been recently regrouped and started preparations for the event.

The lineup excluded top players like Hilal Barakat who was below form in the first division championship. Naser Bushnaq, Marwan Ma'touq and Yousef Zaghoul were also excluded as they have not joined their team in the past two seasons.

The lineup is mostly made up of younger players and includes Ghaith Eannabi, Ma'an Odeh, Yousef Abu Bakr, Naser Alawneh, Ramez Hammoudh, Faisal Nsour, Marwan Saedi, Wisam Nino, Riyad Ayesh, Mohammad Shamali, Aynan Du'yes, Naser Bassam, Jan Sahlieh, Fadi Saqqa, and Ihab Msih.

Mahmoud Sha'han and Zeid Alkhas, both studying in the United States might also join the team.

PSV Eindhoven, Bayern Munich and Juventus champions

LONDON (R) — Past European Cup winners PSV Eindhoven and Bayern Munich joined current holders Juventus as domestic league champions at the weekend.

of the season faded in a crushing 4-0 defeat at Cologne.

Italy

Internazionale Milan recovered from losing the UEFA Cup final and manager Roy Hodgson in less than a week to defeat Napoli 3-2 and maintain their faint hopes of a place in the European Cup.

But Enrico Chiesa's late goal against Bologna

placed Deportivo Coruna 1-0 with an opportunist strike from Ronaldo in the final minute — his 34th goal of the season.

France

Veteran midfielder Vincent Guerin struck a dramatic 89th-minute winner to give Paris St Germain a 2-1 home win over Strasbourg and a place in the European Cup next season as runners-up to Monaco.

Dirk Huysmans, Eric Van Meir and David Brocken. They finished the season two points clear of outgoing champions club Brugge.

Greece

Olympiakos marked their first Greek League title in 10 years with a 6-0 win over Kavala in front of thousands of delirious fans who stormed the pitch in the second half to celebrate prematurely and held the game up for half an hour.

EUROPEAN SOCCER ROUNDUP

Germany

Bayern Munich, who won the European Cup three times from 1974 to 1976, extended their German record to 14 Bundesliga titles when they beat VfB Stuttgart 4-2 on the penultimate weekend of the season.

Two first-half headed goals from Christian Ziege and Mehmet Scholl and second-half strikes from Italian Ruggiero Rizzitelli and Marcel Witeczek secured the Bavarians an unassailable four-point lead over Bayer Leverkusen.

Leverkusen's hopes of pushing the tense title race to next Saturday's final day

ensured second-placed Parma stayed two points clear of Inter with one match left.

Juventus marked their centenary year with a 24th Italian League championship, recovering from a goal down to secure the title by taking a point in a 1-1 draw against Atalanta in Bergamo.

Spain

The Spanish championship was ripped wide open when leaders Real Madrid crashed 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao.

The defeat reduced Real's lead over Barcelona to just two points with three games to play.

Barcelona beat third-

PSG fell behind to a 49th-minute goal by midfielder Olivier Dacourt before equalising in the 63rd minute when defender Paul Le Guen blasted home from a free-kick tapped to him by captain Rai.

Challengers Nantes were beaten 2-1 at champions Monaco and finished three points behind the Paris club.

Belgium

Lierse celebrated their first Belgian League title since 1960 with a 3-0 away win over Standard Liege.

Lierse took charge quickly with first-half goals from

The match restarted after about 30 minutes with the fans lining the perimeter and storming back to celebrate after the final whistle. They tore apart the nets to keep as souvenirs.

Scotland

Kilmarnock won the Scottish Cup for the first time since 1929 with a 1-0 victory over Falkirk in a tense final at Ibrox.

A 21st-minute close-range goal from Paul Wright proved decisive although Falkirk were disallowed an equaliser for offside with five minutes left.

Rockets even series with Jazz on Johnson buzzer-beater

HOUSTON (R) — Eddie Johnson came off the bench to save the Houston Rockets for a second straight game Sunday, hitting a 3-pointer at the buzzer in a 95-92 victory over the Utah Jazz that evened the Western Conference finals at two games apiece.

"I'm 38 years old," said Johnson, who was mobbed by his teammates and near tears after hitting the game-winning shot.

"Just to experience this — not many 38-year-olds get to experience this," Utah had four shots to take the lead on its final possession but Houston finally grabbed the rebound with 6.7 seconds remaining. After a time-out, the Rockets inbounded to Clyde Drexler, who was double-teamed and forced to pass.

Johnson got the ball five feet behind the 3-point arc with under a second left. He launched a shot that swished through as the buzzer sounded.

"In that situation, it's a oo-pressure shot," said Johnson, who scored 31 points in a game 3 win. "If I miss, we go to overtime."

Johnson scored seven points. Hakeem Olajuwon had 27 points and Charles Barkley added 20 and 16 rebounds for the Rockets, who have erased a 2-0 series deficit. En route to NBA titles in 1994 and 1995, Houston also overcame 2-0 deficits in the Conference semifinals.

Game 5 is Thursday at Utah, where the Jazz are 7-0 in the postseason. They have never been to the NBA finals.

"The pressure is on them now," said Olajuwon.

Barkley had criticised his teammates who had already won two championships for not playing with enough intensity. But he said that they showed plenty of fire this time.

Karl Malone had 22 points and 10 rebounds and John Stockton also had 22 points for the Jazz, who scored just 16 points in the fourth quarter.

Drexler scored 16 points and Mario Elie added 11 for the Rockets, who shot 46 per cent (33-of-72) from the field and held a 43-40 rebounding edge. Houston made 6-of-19 3-pointers.

Jeff Hornacek scored 14 points for the Jazz.

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Head of Special
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Turkish Chief of Staff General Ismail Hakki Karadayi (L) and four star Turkish generals accompany the Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan (R) during a wreath laying ceremony at the Mausoleum of Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, in Ankara on Monday after the Supreme Military Council meeting. The Supreme Military Council had announced it had taken the "necessary decisions" to deal with suspected Muslim activists in its ranks (Reuters photo)

Turkish army expels Islamist officers

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's secular armed forces on Monday expelled several officers considered pro-Islamic, in a decree signed by Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, a private television channel said.

"The Supreme Military Council has reviewed the internal and external threats facing the Turkish state and the disciplinary cases of some armed forces members," the Turkish general staff said in a statement.

"The council has taken the necessary decisions," said the statement released after the six-hour council meeting. It did not elaborate.

But NTV said all the council members, including Mr. Erbakan, signed a decree sacking several officers

charged with having links to pro-Islamist groups.

It did not give a figure, but Turkish newspapers said Monday the cases of nearly 50 such officers would be reviewed at the council meeting.

Mr. Erbakan, who is himself involved in a bitter row with the military over creeping Islamisation in Turkey, is technically the head of the council and must ratify the body's decisions before they take effect.

Political analysts said before the meeting that Mr. Erbakan was expected to sign the council decisions in an effort to avoid a fresh confrontation with the military commanders.

The Supreme Military Council groups the prime minister, the defence minis-

ter and the top 15 generals.

Analysts said "disciplinary cases" cited in the military statement referred to the Islamist officers.

The council expelled nearly 60 other Islamist officers from the army at its last meeting in December, and Mr. Erbakan approved the move, drawing criticism from Islamist groups and even some members of his pro-Islamist Welfare Party.

The military has also urged Mr. Erbakan's Islamist-led government to implement a package of measures to curb rising Islamism.

The measures include the closure of state-run secondary schools with Islamic education, the sacking of religious extremists from the state service and a ban on fundamentalist propaganda

by television.

In addition, the military has called on municipalities controlled by Welfare to stop recruiting Islamist officers sacked by the army.

However, reluctance by Mr. Erbakan's pro-Islamist Welfare Party to implement the measures has escalated tensions in recent weeks.

The Supreme Military Council was also expected to discuss an ongoing army incursion into neighbouring northern Iraq to hunt down separatist Kurdish rebels.

Turkish military officials said on Sunday that nearly 1,450 members of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) have been killed in northern Iraq since May 14 when the operation began.

Khatami visits Khomeini's tomb as first public venue

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian president-elect Mohammad Khatami visited the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic republic, Monday in his first public appearance since his surprise election victory.

A smiling Mr. Khatami was welcomed by a military band as he arrived at the tomb of Khomeini and an adjoining mosque, located south of Tehran on a road leading to the holy city of Qom.

The president-elect declined to reply to questions from reporters although he answered "yes" when asked "are you happy for the future of Iran?" He said he would hold a press conference Tuesday.

Sheep were slaughtered on the road as Mr. Khatami, a moderate cleric and former culture minister who won 69

per cent of the vote in Friday's presidential poll, arrived to pay homage to the founder of the Islamic Republic.

"He's shining with spirituality," said a woman dressed in a traditional black robe, or chador, as Mr. Khatami arrived. "I hope he can do what he says. I liked him from the beginning."

Hussein Zadeh, a close friend of the president-elect, said "I am so happy today. (Mr. Khatami's) a very good man. He's a moderate man with healthy Islamic values."

"I think the whole country — the right, conservatives, left — are coming together around him. I think he will be able to help with many of the problems we have. His election shows that we have become a true democracy," he said.

Mr. Khatami sat with one of Ayatollah Khomeini's

grandsons, Hassan, near a large portrait of the late Iranian leader before kissing the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini, who died in 1989, and wiping his eyes with a green cloth.

Mr. Khatami also visited a cemetery and mosque in memory of the "martyrs" of the country's 1979 Islamic revolution in which Ayatollah Khomeini came to power.

It was Mr. Khatami's first public appearance since he defeated parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, the candidate backed by the ruling Islamic clergy, in Friday's election.

In a message broadcast on state radio and television Sunday, Mr. Khatami pledged to help build "a better future in a society ruled by law with a strong sense of spirituality and free of any lawlessness."

Israeli survey reveals forty per cent of youth hate Arabs

JERUSALEM (AFP) — Forty per cent of Israeli high school students hate Arabs and 60 per cent of them want "revenge" for attacks on Israelis, according to a survey published Monday.

The students questioned did not usually differentiate between Arabs and terrorists, according to the poll of 5,318 students in the tenth to twelfth grades taken by Haifa University and the Karmel Institute for Social Surveys.

The hate among Israeli Jews for Arabs has grown since Haifa University began in 1974 taking such surveys on "threats to education."

During the same year,

some 32 per cent of those students polled reported they hated Arabs. By 1988 the percentage had grown to 39 per cent and increased to 40 per cent this year.

In the recent survey only nine per cent of students said they do not hate Arabs, down from 17 per cent in 1974.

The highest percentage of those who hate Arabs was found among female students at Israeli religious, vocational schools, with 79 per cent reporting they hate most or all Arabs.

The lowest percentage was measured at Israeli kibbutzes, which are customarily more left-wing, that reported 32 per cent of their

students hate Arabs.

Of those that answered they hate Arabs in the overall survey, 75 per cent were from development cities or small towns, from vocational or traditionally religious schools or from families which emigrated from Arab countries.

Those taking the survey emphasised that this 75 per cent may view the Israeli Arab minority as competing with them on a socio-economic level.

Some 20 per cent of Israelis are Palestinians who did not flee during the 1948 Israeli war of independence and then took on Israeli citizenship.

Glint of hope for accused UK nurses in Saudi murder trial

LONDON (R) — The brother of an Australian nurse who was murdered in Saudi Arabia said on Monday her two British colleagues accused of the crime could be spared the death sentence if they are convicted.

Frank Gilford told Britain's Independent Radio news that there were other options for Deborah Parry, 41, and Lucille McLaughlan, 31, if they are found guilty of murdering his sister Yvonne, 51.

She had been stabbed, suffocated and bludgeoned with a hammer in her dormitory room at the King Fahd Medical Complex in Dhahran last December.

Both nurses have denied the murder.

If convicted of murder, the two nurses could face public beheading by the sword, or the Gilford family could

spare their lives by accepting financial compensation, known as blood money.

The family had insisted on the death penalty but Gilford said he would be willing to discuss other options with prosecution lawyers.

"There are more options than just the blood money and the beheading," he said in an interview from his home in Jamestown, Australia.

"Apparently, there is imprisonment in the case as well. You, know, they can go to prison or something like that."

The defence said in a statement on Monday that the Saudi court had adjourned for three weeks to give the Gilford family time to consider a settlement.

"The judge today (Sunday) urged the Australian family as a direct

request from the court and notwithstanding any earlier appeals, to accept that it may be possible to reach a conciliatory settlement if and when there should be an appropriate time for this," said the law firm Salah Al Hejailan.

Saudi police said the nurses confessed to the murder and the confessions had been filed with Saudi judges. But their lawyers said they had withdrawn their confessions and one of them retracted a statement that she had a lesbian relationship with the victim.

They also insisted they were forced into admitting the crime, legal sources close to the case said.

Legal experts say if they are found guilty of manslaughter rather than murder, the nurses would not be condemned to death.

Arab League seeks postponement of Somali reconciliation meeting

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League is seeking a postponement of a Somali reconciliation conference amid fears that its failure to pave the way for a national government could lead to renewed civil war, officials said.

The Somalia National Salvation Council (SNSC) which groups 26 Somali factions allied to one of three powerful warlords, Ali Mahdi, has called for the conference to take place June 10 in Bossaso, northeast Somalia.

But a senior Arab League official said the 22-member pan-Arab organisation, of which Somalia is a member, wants to delay the meeting to ensure harmony between all factions.

The conference is aimed at forming a government for Somalia, which has been without one since the 1991 outbreak of civil war following the fall of President Siad

Barre.

But Somali warlord Hussein Aidede is refusing to join the smaller 26 factions of the SNSC while Mr. Mahdi believes that these groups will help strengthen his hand at the negotiating table.

The league, with Egypt and Yemen's help, is trying to convene instead an initial tripartite meeting in Cairo or Somalia grouping Mr. Mahdi, Mr. Aidede and Mohammad Ibrahim Ogol, who heads the self-proclaimed "Somaliland Republic in the north of Somalia, the official said.

For Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid this would serve as a more efficient tool to pave the way for an enlarged national reconciliation conference of all players in the conflict that has torn apart Somalia.

Italy's special envoy for Somalia, Giuseppe Cassini, shares Mr. Abdel Meguid's views, that the proclamation of an unrepresentative gov-

ernment in Bossaso could trigger a new civil war.

"All the leaders of the faction must go for a united national congress otherwise the others might be tempted to challenge the (new) government and that would be a new civil war," Mr. Cassini told reporters in Cairo Sunday after talks with Mr. Abdel Meguid.

The Arab League would like to limit the Bossaso conference, if it goes ahead, to a preparatory meeting to ensure the success of a national reconciliation congress, the Arab official said.

Both Egypt and Yemen have an interest in maintaining stability in Somalia, a strategic country on the Horn of Africa.



Humperdinck sings to cheering audience in Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — A packed house cheered British sentimental singer Engelbert Humperdinck as he performed old favourites like "Please Release Me" and "The Shadow of Your Smile." "You Are Amazing. You Are Wonderful," the 61-year-old Humperdinck told the audience. "You are what makes us keep going."

His concert Saturday night drew some 7,000 people to the Forum De Beyrouth Hall. The hall is in the Qarantina district, which witnessed some of the most savage fighting in the 1975-90 civil war. "I was on a cloud," Widad Demekchieh, a 50-year-old jeweller, said as she watched the show. "He was breathtaking. I could listen to him for ages." Humperdinck is the latest in a series of European stars who have performed in Beirut since the civil war ended. Spanish tenor Jose Carreras performed last month.

Bulgarian crosses border asleep at the wheel

BUCHAREST (AFP) — A Bulgarian farmer working his fields on a tractor fell asleep at the wheel and woke up in Romania surrounded by border guards, a newspaper said Monday. Ilija Anghelov, from the northeastern village of Alexandria near the Romanian border, told the guards he was exhausted from a long day in the fields last Thursday and had simply nodded off. Evenimentul Zilei said. The border guards, who actually had to wake Anghelov up, said they found his story credible and sent him home on his tractor without filing charges for entering Romania illegally.

Michael Jackson hopes to buy Polish castle

WARSAW (AFP) — U.S. pop star Michael Jackson, who is due to arrive here Tuesday, wants to buy a Polish castle and build a theme park in the country, sources close to the organisers of the visit said. Warsaw Mayor Marcin Swiechicki, who announced the singer's visit Sunday, said then that Jackson wanted to make "major investments" in Poland. Jackson is due to arrive in Warsaw at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday and will stay in the four-room presidential suite at the Marriott Hotel, hotel spokeswoman Joanna Hryc told AFP. Jackson gave a concert in front of 100,000 people in Warsaw last September which he described as the best of a tour to promote his history album. He said at the time that he would return to Poland.

Kiss hits to be elevator music

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Kiss, those 1970s heavy metal performers with painted faces, have just signed a deal to turn four of their hits into elevator music. Muzak's Environmental Music Channels has acquired the rights to feature instrumental versions of four Kiss hits, a company executive reported. The songs are "World Without Heroes," "Everytime I Look at You," "Sure Knocked Out" and "Beth," the executive reported.

Israel expropriated 3,000 hectares of Palestinian land this year — report

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel has expropriated 3,000 hectares of land in the West Bank since January to expand Jewish settlements and build roads for settlers, according to a report published Monday.

The detailed report authored by a deputy in the left-wing Meretz Party said the lands were expropriated and re-zoned for construction in virtually all sectors of the West Bank to provide for future settlement growth.

If completed, the expansion programme would significantly increase the settler population in the territory, where 1.5 million Palestinians live and where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) wants to set up an independent state, according to the report published in the newspaper Haaretz.

Land seizures carried out since January included hundreds of hectares near the southern West Bank city of

Hebron, hundreds in the Jordan Valley and nearly 2,000 in areas around Jerusalem, according to the report's author, Dedi Zucker.

Most land expropriations around Jerusalem were designed to form a land corridor between Arab east Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement of Maale Adumim, he said.

Mr. Zucker said all land expropriations were approved by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, but ministry spokesmen were unable to immediately confirm or deny his report.

Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts are already in crisis over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to expand existing settlements in the West Bank and to build a new 6,500-unit project for Jews in Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu insists that his policy so far involves only building inside exist-

ing settlements and does not call for any expropriation of private Arab lands.

After occupying the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war, Israel declared much of the area "state lands" and routinely rejects Arab ownership claims.

Palestinians say the settlements are designed to prevent them from creating their own state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem.

Negotiations between the two sides have been frozen since Israel broke ground in mid-March on the new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

Israel has rejected demands from the Palestinians, backed by Egypt, the United States and the European Union, for a temporary freeze on settlement construction pending the outcome of planned negotiations on the final status of the occupied territories.

Regional summit on Sudan, Uganda conflict cancelled

NAIROBI (AFP) — A regional summit planned for this week to discuss the conflict between Sudan and Uganda has been called off, a Kenyan Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday.

The meeting, which would have brought together leaders of the Regional Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), was scheduled to take place here Wednesday. But it was cancelled because those leaders are preparing to attend the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit in Harare next week.

IGAD, currently headed by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, groups Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

Sudanese President Omar Bashir and his Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni pledged after meeting with Mr. Moi in Kenya on May 10 to end hostilities and "open a new chapter" in their troubled relations.

The two countries have been at loggerheads over the past two years with Sudan accusing Uganda of backing the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which is battling Sudanese troops in southern Sudan. Uganda has denied the charge.

treaty hogged down.

A secret meeting between Mr. Netanyahu and His Majesty King Hussein in Aqaba two weeks ago broke through the water dispute and the Israeli cabinet on Friday approved a deal to provide Jordan with additional water over the next three years, press reports said Sunday.

The two governments are also working on a plan to set up a joint airport for Aqaba and Eilat.

Israel to open consulate in Jordan's Red Sea port

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel will open a consulate in the Jordanian Red Sea resort of Aqaba, where the two governments are seeking to develop joint tourism facilities, the Israeli foreign ministry said Sunday.

The consulate will deal with economic issues and provide assistance to Israeli tourists travelling in Aqaba, located next to the Israeli resort of Eilat, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

led a water dispute that had recently sent bilateral tensions soaring.

Israel's relations with Jordan soured dramatically after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu started construction in March of a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem, a move highly criticised by Amman and which brought peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians to a halt.

A new crisis arose earlier this month when talks on water sharing arrangements called for under the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace